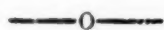


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THE
SIXPENNY MAGAZINE.

JUNE 1, 1867.

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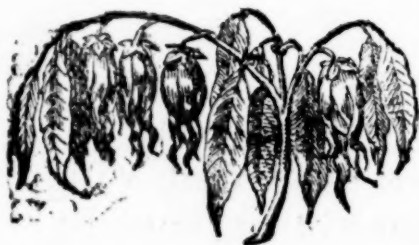
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Sixpenny Magazine.

MANOR MELLERAY

CHAPTER I.

THE WARD.

ON a fine, cool, sunless day in October, a gentleman, leaving the town of Wearmouth behind him, walked along a quiet road, with a blank wall at one side, and a quickset edge at the other, until he came to a little green door in the wall, with the inscription, "Mrs. Cunningham's Select Boarding School for Young Ladies" on the brass-plate; and here he stopped, and rang the bell. The door was opened by a middle-aged man, in an old brown shooting-jacket, who looked like a gardener. He touched his hat, and admitted the gentleman; and then, having closed the door again, preceded him along a neat gravelled avenue, with little plots of closely-mown grass at each side, until they came to a plain, white, stiff-looking house, with every stone of it proclaiming the boarding-school. The avenue, as it neared the house, was bordered by a low wall and iron railing, looking through which the visitor saw a patch of carefully cultivated ground, cut up into little parterres of bright green, flecked now, however, by the rich, deeper hues of autumn, and dotted here and there with a few clumps of trees, whose lately-fallen leaves carpeted the little narrow paths that intersected the grass; whilst farther down—for the ground fell away abruptly—was a wide but uneven walk—uneven by reason of the scraggs of rocks that jutted up at too frequent intervals, threatening the unwary health-seeker with an occasional tumble; and then, further down still, came great boulders of white granite rocks, and then a long, low line of brown sea-weed; and then the wide, wide sea. He saw also a few girlish figures strolling about, and one was seated in a pensive attitude, down quite close to the low murmuring waves, as if drinking in the wonderful things they were telling of.



The gardener opened the door, and ushered his visitor through a hall into a nice, neat little parlour, with a cottage piano, a small cabinet, with a white marble slab, and a few simple ornaments arranged thereon; a centre table, with a vase of wax flowers in the middle; a writing-desk, a lady's workbasket, and a few engravings on the walls. There was a fire in the grate; a cocoa matting was laid from the door from the hall straight across the floor, which was stained and waxed, to another leading to some inner apartment. There were windows at each side of the room. The gentleman turned to the left, and there, as he expected, he had the same view as that of which he had caught a glimpse on the lawn; and he stood looking out, whilst the gardener rang a little hand-bell that was on the cabinet; and when it was answered by a steady, elderly woman, he gave her the gentleman's card, which he had laid on the table, and then he went away by one door, and the woman by another; and Mrs. Cunningham's visitor was left to himself.

He was a young man, about twenty-nine or thirty, tall, well-made, broad-chested; his figure firmly knit and powerful; and although he was fully six feet, he did not look so tall, being so well-proportioned. His head was very fine, and was surmounted by a mass of light, wavy chestnut hair; the face had originally been fair enough, but it was now tanned to a sturdy brown; the features cleanly cut and expressive; the nose well-shaped, with thin, curling nostrils; the lips arched and full of power. But it was to his eyes that the attention was chiefly drawn; they were magnificent—large, dark, full of fire and penetration, keen as lightning in their glance, and expressive of much intelligence and thought. He was, in fact, what is called a very fine young man—tall and handsome, with a face that, once seen, was not easily forgotten, for, without being handsome at all, it would command attention by means of the life, vigour, and manly power legible in every feature, and the wondrous fire that gave such expression to his dark eyes. There was decision—indeed, almost sternness—in the firm hold of his mouth, but it disappeared when he smiled, and his smile was sunny, though rare. He wore a plain suit of dark grey tweed, that was not of the newest, and had, besides, a slightly foreign look. There was a careless ease in his whole appearance, but it was easy to detect the gentleman through all that apparent indifference to externals. It could be seen in his walk, in his hands, in his carriage, in the way he lounged against the window, and pulled his tawny beard, and in the cut and look of his face. His whole *personnel* proclaimed him one of the upper ten thousand; and there was, too, that dash and daring and indescribable air which hangs about a British officer. For he had been in the army ever since he left college, and had only just returned to England after five years' service in India;

and it was the burning sun of that and one or two other tropical countries that he might thank for the dark hue of his complexion.

He leaned against the window, and gazed idly out. It was a pleasant scene: motion, music, and colour. The ever-shifting bosom of the sea; the low, white line of breakers, slowly but surely advancing towards those great pyramids of rocks; the swift, uncertain, and not unfrequently graceful movements of one group of girls, the tender dawdling of others; the ringing laugh breaking at times from the merry ones through the plaintive song of the waves; and anon the soft murmuring of voices that rose on the clear air, from their more thoughtful companions; and then what variety of colour in the rich autumn sky, with great white, silvery masses, shifting lazily over the profound blue; in the corresponding azure and opal of the sea; in the mingling of gold and green in trees and grass; and, finally, in the fair, young, rosy faces of Mrs. Cunningham's pupils! He had seen far grander and more beautiful scenes, but perhaps none that pleased him better; at least, he seemed to find much enjoyment in looking out, for he was so engrossed as not to hear the door open, and was only aroused by the rustling of silk close behind him. Turning, he faced a little lady in black silk, with tufts of curls that *seemed*, at least, to be her own hair, drawn out from under her lace cap, and making quite becoming furniture at each side of her smooth, smiling, unwrinkled face—one of those faces that lead one astray as to the possible age of the owner. It would be hard to say whether Mrs. Cunningham was forty or fifty; and she wore a short brown velvet cape over her shoulders, and black lace gloves on her well-cared-for hands. She must have been good-looking in her youth; she was good-looking still—a pleasant, genial little lady, that you felt might be motherly, spite of those small affectations which imparted a slight flavour of old maidenism to her manner, and set one suspecting that she must have married some time after the first girlish bloom had disappeared. She received Mr. Levison gushingly, but with perhaps a shade more warmth than the occasion would seem to require. To be sure, it was five years since she had seen him last, but then it happened that that occasion was his first visit; and so the extent of their acquaintance would not seem to warrant the show of rapturous welcome on the schoolmistress's part.

But the manners of the best people in the world are apt to be influenced by circumstances. Mr. Levison had at that time surrendered to her care a little girl between ten and eleven years of age; a pale, fragile-looking child, with great, wondering eyes, and thick clusters of brown, gold-flecked hair; and had promised her a very handsome stipend, to be paid half-yearly by his own bankers. He had merely removed the child from a similar establishment,

which, for some reason or another, had not suited ; and it was at the recommendation of a friend that he selected Bird's-nest House. Miss Evelyn Dormer was to be taught everything that is deemed requisite to a young lady's education ; and on Mrs. Cunningham's promising that no care should be spared with her, the young man had taken his leave, and he left England shortly after for India, with his regiment. And ever since then, Evelyn had written dutiful school-girl epistles—in which were recounted the pieces she was practising, and the Racine or Corneille she was translating, and the impossible flowers, or trees, or vines, she was committing to paper—to her guardian ; and had received, in reply, short, hastily-scrawled letters, in which the young officer “ was glad to hear she was getting on so well, hoped she would continue so, and that she would tell him if she wanted money or anything he could do for her, and begged she would excuse his brevity, as a soldier's time did not admit of correspondence,” &c. And on such occasions, Mrs. Cunningham, who always read her pupils' letters, was wont to say, that it was fortunate for Miss Dormer to be placed under *her* wise charge, and not be depending on this warlike guardian of hers, who could never find time to jot down one word of advice to his young ward, and whose letters, even after that long sea voyage, always seemed to smell of cigars and champagne ; but this, perhaps, was due rather to Mrs. Cunningham's strong imagination than to the young man's carelessness.

“ You will, I think, find her very much improved,” said she, as soon as they had shaken hands, and he had inquired for his ward. “ Evelyn has much talent, but she is a little disposed to be indolent. Her masters, however, make no complaint, and I find her very bright and attentive ; not gifted with much application, to be sure ; she depends so much on her memory, which is, indeed, excellent. Then she is fond of reading, which is a good thing, as it helps to steady the mind, providing, of course, that the matter be good.”

“ Is she giddy, then ?” asked the gentleman, thinking it was incumbent on him to make some such inquiry.

“ Oh, no ! not giddy, although at her age that would not be very wonderful ; but she is gay, and addicted to looking out for the recreation hours ; and, as I said, a little idle. I would recommend, if—but allow me to ask, as you said in your letter (the contents of which I thought it better not to make known to Evelyn until I should have seen you) that you would soon remove her, may I ask, Mr. Levison, do you intend to do so immediately ?”

“ Well, yes ; I believe so.”

“ Because, as I was about to say, I would recommend that she should continue her studies ; I would on no account allow her to

give them up. She is by no means possessed of that information and finish which I could wish to see in a young lady leaving my establishment. If there is not any absolute necessity, it is, I must say, a great pity to remove her so soon. She is just arrived at that point when impressions are most easily made, and when the greatest attention to the culture of the mind is required. Within the last year she had made rapid improvement, and another year or two would do wonders. She has now entered on a course of studies, than which nothing can be better for the exercise of the faculties, and the acquisition of knowledge. I will go so far as to say that I believe my method a good one. Mr. Baxter—he is our clergyman—says he finds Miss Dormer very much advanced since last year, and that is because it is since then she has entered on the course I speak of. If you will take my advice, Mr. Levison,” said the schoolmistress, with an affectation of candid bluntness, but throwing him a sharp glance at the same time, “you will leave your ward in my care for another year or so.”

Now it must be admitted that the young man had not exactly heard every one of the preceding remarks, for his attention had somewhat wandered, and amongst other things, he was thinking, would it be too soon to ask to see his ward, as he had no inclination for a long discussion, as to the advantage of one course over another, with her teacher; but when she hurled this decisive opinion at him, he was under the necessity of answering it, and so he said, with a view to escape any further boring on the subject, “I will ask the little thing what she would like herself.”

“Little thing! why, Mr. Levison, you seem to think she is a child still!”

“And is not she? Upon my word I *did* think she was a child still. I suppose she’s grown!” he added, opening his fine eyes, as if it was then the idea first struck him.

“Dear me!” exclaimed Mrs. Cunningham, “how odd! Why she is a great girl, as the little ones say—quite a young lady! You look surprised at that!”

“Well, yes, I *am* surprised. You can scarcely believe it, I suppose, but I quite expected to find her as I left her. It never occurred to me that little girls will grow up into young women. Whenever I have thought of my ward at all, it was as the delicate-looking child, with those large wondering eyes, that never seemed capable of any expression but surprise, and who clung to me when I was going away, as if she feared that everybody else in the world were cannibals. And so she is a big girl now; I declare I did not quite calculate on that.” He seemed by his tone to be not only surprised, but disappointed, perplexed. He had not calculated on encountering a formidable young lady. It was for the little

child he had left here that he was come; and he was told that she was no longer to be found—that she was changed into a young lady; and he had an idea that that was a species difficult to be managed. At least, it seemed a very onerous thing to be guardian to a young lady; and that was the relation he held to Miss Evelyn Dormer—a relation contracted under peculiar circumstances, which will be explained hereafter. Those five years had passed very quickly with him, in the stirring life of a soldier, and at the mess-table of his brother-officers; and, as he had candidly admitted, whenever he *did* think of his ward, it was as an absolute child, it never once occurring to him that she was growing all this time.

Mrs. Cunningham regarded her visitor curiously, and with some interest.

“You will find a change in her, then,” she said, after a few minutes’ pause of mild wonder at the possibility of any young man, however given to warlike pursuits, taking for granted that a little girl would remain a little girl always. “I am sure you are anxious to see your ward, Mr. Levison. I will desire Deborah to send her here to us.” She rang the bell whilst speaking. “I daresay Evelyn is out in the grounds,” said Mrs. Cunningham, grandiloquently. “Yes, I see her now; there, on the sea walk! Do you see? with a book that she is *not* reading.”

“Suppose we go to her,” said he, suddenly.

Now Mrs. Cunningham did not relish this proposal, for many reasons, the chief one, perhaps, being, that she would prefer her pupil to have time to “do herself up,” as she called it, before being presented to her guardian, as it was not by any means certain that she would be in the smartest condition. However, she perceived that he wished it, and complied, hoping in her heart that Miss Dormer would not prove too untidy on close inspection. She was opening one of the windows, which served as a door, when Deborah entered from the hall, ushering in fresh visitors, the mother and father of one of her chief pupils, and those important people should not, of course, be neglected. Mrs. Cunningham looked her perplexity, but the gentleman hastened to relieve her.

“Pray, do not mind,” said he—“I can make my ward’s acquaintance without assistance;” and then, with a bow, he stepped out through the open window, and turned down the path leading to the sea walk. But, after a little bit, it diverged to the right, and he crossed over the grass towards where the young girl was seated, consequently she did not hear him approach; so he had full leisure to take notes before addressing her.

He saw a slight, girlish figure, in a careless attitude, that was not devoid of grace. A piece of rock, covered with dry seaweed,

supported one arm, and the slim, white hand looked very fair over the brown, soft surface, playing with the little round, fat blobs of the briny plant, in a plain, stuff dress, but no cloak or paletot, and the month October! A very dilapidated hat on the little head, one side of which head-gear had undergone evident ill-treatment, for it fell in a limp way down over her ear, like the wounded wing of a bird, the other side of the leaf retaining its original outspread fashion, making altogether a not too picturesque effect. Such a hat would ruin the *personnel* of any young lady. But Miss Dormer must not be set down as very untidy on account of the disreputable appearance of her hat, nor would Mrs. Cunningham tolerate slovenliness to that extent. It had emerged from the cloak-room innocent of break or fissure; but she, having been persuaded to exchange head-dresses with her present companion, an atom of four years, with flaxen curls and big blue eyes, "a perfect little cherub," as the girls called her, but void of a cherub's harmless disposition, the unfortunate hat had been subjected to such bad usage, that Evelyn was under the necessity of claiming her property, showing her amiable nature at the same time by foregoing to prosecute for damages, except what might be taken in the form of a kiss. All this had taken place before Mr. Levison came upon the scene, and as he did not know the circumstances, he, no doubt, concluded that want of tidiness was to be added to his ward's other crime of growing up into a young woman, instead of continuing in the more satisfactory shape of a child, which she presented five years before. It was, perhaps, some satisfaction to him to perceive that her hands were small and white, and exquisitely shaped, and to catch a glimpse of a round, snowy throat, and a delicately-moulded cheek and chin, and a tiny, shell-like ear, and heavy braids of shining brown hair, albeit not in the most classical arrangement, for one or two stray locks—half waves, half curls—that almost took a golden hue, were wandering over her shoulder. The voice would tell a great deal, and he waited, rather unfairly, to hear her speak. She was teaching the cherub to spell; but whether it was that her efforts were not very vigorous, or that cherubs in general are not burdened with the useful appurtenances of brains, the progress was not to say brilliant.

"Now, Pidgie!" (what Pidgie meant Heaven knows) "you must spell 'tree.' You are into four letters at last, you little dunce! Will you ever get out of one syllable? You know how to spell 'cat,' and 'dog,' and 'man,' and 'sea.' Who was it taught you 'sea?'"

"Mees Chyar," bleated the child, meekly.

"Miss Thiers! I'll never do so much as Miss Thiers, I am sure! I haven't the method, as Miss Somers calls it. But now, Doady, we must try to climb the tree. We'll never get up to the top,

meaning the final 'e,' if we don't begin sometime. Now begin! 'T,'—there, I am giving you a push, you most unteachable of darlings."

"T," began Pidgie, bravely.

"That's right! Now the next. I'll not tell you any more! I am going to be very strict. Oh, look as bewitching as you please! No, I won't kiss you! I'll have those cherries of yours kissed away altogether, and you know the other girls must have their share. They take their turn to teach you, as well as I do. Now for the method! I wonder would Miss Thiers tell you that the next letter was 'r!' I suppose not. She'd make you find it out, and you *must* find it out. I won't tell you that it is 'r.'"

"But Mees Dawmie," said Pidgie, neglecting to profit by the relaxed method, "will ee gie me dat fust?" and she pointed to a snow white lamb, made of sugar, that was perched temptingly on Evelyn's knee, and was to be the reward of that day's performance.

"Oh, no! not yet. The lamb is to be the reward if you're good. You shan't get him until you have spelled 'tree.' That is all I will ask for to-day. And you must not be looking at him either. There, I'll send him off to graze upon the rocks, though it's not much grass he will get there, poor little lamb! What, is it tears? Well, I'll bring him back. There now, don't cry, you heavenly little tease! You see he's back, and you may feast your eyes on him until the lesson is finished. Now go on!"

"But, Mees Dawmie!" persisted the terrestrial cherub, "if ee gie me de lamb, me will spell better, eaten 'm," and then she put out the two fat little hands in a coaxing way, to receive the coveted prize, the rosy little face full of the irresistable pleading of which a child's face is capable.

"Better than what?" said her young teacher, in a tone that showed she was half won over; "better than you've done up to this? That *would* be something, to be sure! I suppose you'll come to the 'r.' Will you ever say 'r,' little dunce, and I telling it to you all the time? Oh, the lamb, the lamb—he must be given up! And would you eat him, you cruel little savage? Well, I suppose I must give it to you! I know Miss Thiers wouldn't, nor Ella Sharman, but I'll never have the method! I cannot say no to you. Then, to be sure, it is good to encourage," added Miss Dormer, in a self-consolatory tone. "You will spell 'tree' right, Pidgie—won't you, if I give it to you?"

"Me will!" was very eagerly said, and then the lamb was delivered up. The child's ecstasy was abundant reward to her teacher for that indulgence, and what between watching her, and exhortations to be merciful to the poor lamb, and to refrain from eating him, and assertions on Pidgie's part that she knew he was

sweet, and that she would begin at the tail, and leave the rest of him whole for a little while longer, and Miss Dormer's opinion, sagely expressed, that the loss of his tail would disfigure him entirely—there was little chance of the lesson getting on to a satisfactory conclusion. Mr. Levison was amused. He had discovered, to his satisfaction, that his ward's voice was neither loud nor coarse; it was a sweet girlish voice, not very low, indeed, but with a merry ring, that promised it could break into laughter on the slightest provocation, and he would have no objection to hear more of this dialogue. But Pidgie, looking round in the midst of her exultation, discovered the intruder, and pointed him out to her companion with her chubby little fore-finger, extended unceremoniously towards him, and whispering, awe-struck, "Look, look!" And then Evelyn glanced round carelessly, but seeing a strange gentleman coming directly towards her, she rose hastily, her colour heightened, the ill-used hat, which had slipped to the side of her head, tumbling off altogether with that sudden movement; and then she stood for a minute irresolutely, whilst the more audacious Pidgie advanced cautiously towards the intruder, as if to find out whether he was friendly disposed or otherwise.

But he did not take any heed of *her*; his gaze was fastened on her instructress, profound astonishment legible in his dark, classical face. Could it be that the puny little girl he had entrusted to Mrs. Cunningham was transformed into this beautiful creature, half child, half woman, with that lithe, *svelte*, graceful figure, and that girlish face of promising loveliness? She was slim, of middle height; the rich brown hair, that used to fall in unmanageable curls about her shoulders, was braided simply round her little head, with the exception of a stray curl or two that the winds of heaven made free with; her face was usually pale, with a delicate, sea-shell tint in each cheek; but now it had a rich bloom, called up by this unaccountable intrusion. The soft, lustrous eyes—eyes of deep violet, with long, dark lashes, that gave them a languid, dreamy look when they were not wide open with wonder or merriment—were turned on the stranger for one moment in a questioning way; then calling the child, who, she thought, was making rather free, being engaged in staring up vigorously into the gentleman's face, she was going to pass him, when, taking off his hat, he said:

"I beg your pardon! Are you not Miss Dormer? Allow me to make myself known to you. I am your guardian."

She opened the gazelle-like eyes with wonder. Was it possible this handsome stranger, so gentlemanly, so dashing, so imperative, so different—oh! so different from M. de la Place, the dancing-master, and Mr. Lane, the drawing-master, and dear, timid, friendly Mr. Baxter, the curate, who had hitherto been the model of super-

nal male excellence in the eyes of the Bird's-nest young ladies. But with that second glance—for the first was a very brief one—she remembered him, although during all those years she had been picturing a much more matured individual as her guardian. Those five years had seemed a very long period in her life, the monotony of each day adding something to its hours. She had grown from a mere child almost into a young woman; and, without deliberating on the matter, the idea had become fixed in her mind that the guardian, to whom she wrote those simple, uninteresting letters, would be quite a staid gentleman when she would see him next. It was as a man tall and bearded that she remembered him; and here he was now, quite a young man still. Evelyn had been a thoughtful child at eleven, and kindness made a deep impression on her. She recollected his kind words, his presents; and rousing out of that bewildered, bashful attitude, she gave him her hand, frankly.

"I remember you now, oh! so well! You are Mr. Levison. How queer that I should be writing to you, and still not know you just now!"

"Yes, I am Mr. Levison, and you are Miss Dormer. I believe there can be no doubt about that."

"You find me changed, then?" said she, laughing at the remains of his surprise still in his face.

"I should think so! You know you were not much bigger than that morsel," pointing to Pidgie, who was still clinging to her skirt, "when I left you here. The best of it is, I could scarcely believe it was you, you are so—so changed, and you were going to pass me because I am too like my former self. Come, now, Miss Evelyn, confess you thought your guardian would be quite an old fellow by this time?"

"No, not old, exactly; but I fancied that you would not be quite so—that you would be like Mr. Baxter, with the first fall of snow on your hair, as Miss Somers says."

He laughed.

"Miss Somers is a little sentimental, I suspect, and no doubt calls a bird 'a feathered songster,' and would apostrophise that big wave rolling in there as 'the treacherous billow,' and tells you sometimes, when the advice is needed, to arrange your 'dishevelled tresses.'"

He glanced at her hair as he spoke, which was becoming more disorganised every instant, and stopped to pick up her hat, which she had forgotten. As she received it from him, Evelyn looked at him in mild amazement, wondering was it possible he could be laughing at the head teacher; but guessing rightly that the allusion to her "dishevelled tresses" was a hint, she gathered up her stray locks, and tied on the well-worn hat, and then asked:

"Does Mrs. Cunningham know that you are here?"

"Yes, but she has some visitors, and I said I would find you without her; I suppose she will join us when they are gone. Let us go along this walk here. But first, don't you think a cloak, or shawl, or wrapper of some kind, would be of use to you. I perceive you have none, and the day is rather cool."

"Oh, no; I don't feel the cold. Are you going to take me away from Bird's-nest, Mr. Levison?"

"Well, at least we are going to discuss the question. But, *à propos* of the cloak, you had better provide yourself, or must I ask that grim-looking female that is going along there towards what are the kitchen apartments, I suppose, to bring one to you?"

Evelyn was throwing up her head saucily to repeat her assertion that she was independent of cloak or shawl, when meeting his eye and reading there "Remember, I am your guardian, and you are bound to obey me," she ran away, laughing, to do as he desired her. But she was called back by Pidgie, who began to scream out lustily, at being left behind; and she returned and took her away with her. She was sometime absent, and when she made her appearance—he had waited for her in the very same spot—her hair was neatly arranged; she wore another and better-conditioned hat, and a sealskin paletot was buttoned over her bosom.

"Ah! you fell into prudent hands since, Miss Evelyn!" said her guardian to himself, as she approached.

Then they turned down the sea-walk, in a different direction from where her companions mustered, indulging in voluble wonder as to who the handsome gentleman might be that was speaking to Evelyn Dormer. He had a good deal to say to her, or rather he drew her on to say a good deal to him; and heard a full history of her school-day life, and of all that had happened to her since he had brought her—a little girl—to Mrs. Cunningham's "select boarding-school;" which, to be sure, was not much in the way of adventure, but the changes in class, the coming of new pupils, and the departure of old ones; the various studies, and rules, and recreation hours,—were all very interesting to Evelyn, whatever they might be to the Indian officer, who was listening so attentively to her. At last she stopped, remembering that it was not to a person who might be supposed to care about such things she was speaking, and wondered how much at her ease she was with her guardian already.

"I came here, intending to take you away," he said then, "without thinking of consulting yourself on the subject; but as I find you quite a young lady, I suppose I ought to ask whether

you prefer to remain here, or accompany me home to Manor Melleray."

"To Manor Melleray!" she repeated, in surprise.

"Yes; you have not heard that my mother's health has been failing latterly. But for that Letitia would have been to see you oftener. She was here once, I believe?"

"Yes, but that is a hundred years ago."

"Indeed! what a wonderful memory you have. I must say you do not look so very venerable."

"Oh, it's so long!" said Evelyn, laughing merrily. "I believe about a year or two after I came here first."

"My mother's health is the cause; she is troubled with nervous attacks, and Letitia is the only one who can soothe her at such moments. And then, as she could not travel, Letitia would not leave her to come so far as this. It is the whole length of England, you know. But of late she has had a great desire to see a little girl, who was a pet of hers years ago, and from whom she very unwillingly parted, when my father deemed it expedient to send her to school before his death, fearing that she would be spoiled utterly."

"Oh, it's me, I know!" exclaimed Evelyn, overlooking Lindley Murray's precepts in the excitement of the moment. "I remember Lady Elizabeth—oh, so well! and I am so glad I shall see her soon again! When am I to go, Mr. Levison!" and her face beamed with delight as she spoke.

He smiled at her eagerness.

"It is Manor Melleray *versus* Mrs. Cunningham's select boarding-school. I believe Manor Melleray is to gain the day. And so I shall tell the little lady that she is to lose her pupil; that you will come home with me."

"Yes, but I'll be sorry all the same for leaving this," said his ward with a wistful look towards the stiff, square house, with all the blinds drawn up to the exact same altitude, and the windows fastened down to keep out the east wind, and the great bell lodged between two ungrateful pinnacles, over the little porch, speaking of study, and punctuality, and eternal monotony; but a symbol, too, of the welcome recreation hours that were enjoyed all the more from the enforced silence and decorum, that preceded them. "I wish I could be in the two places! No, I don't mean that," she added, perceiving a merry twinkle in his eyes. "Of course that is impossible, but it will be so hard to part from all the girls, and from Mrs. Cunningham, and Miss Somers, and Miss Hubert, and Peter, the gardener, and little Pidgie, *she* is the gardener's daughter. All the girls take turns to teach her. She is such a little doat!"

"Yes," said Mr. Levison, "and a most intractable doat, I must say; she will scarcely progress very rapidly when deprived of the invaluable tuition of Miss Dormer, of which I had an example just now."

"Oh! indeed she won't have much loss in me," she returned, demurely; "I don't know much myself, not to speak of teaching her."

"I expect you are quite an accomplished young lady," said he, gravely. "I shall have an opportunity of knowing soon; Mrs. Cunningham recommends that you should continue your studies, and cultivate your mind, and all that."

"When I go to Manor Melleray?"

"Yes."

She made no reply, but pouted her lips prettily.

"She says you are a little indolent," he continued, having caught a glimpse of that *move*. "I suppose, as I am your guardian, it will be incumbent on me to see that you do not neglect your studies, as I fear my mother will not be very strict."

"Will not you return to India, Mr. Levison?" she asked, looking as if she wished he might.

He laughed heartily.

"No; so you see you are not going to escape; and I suppose I must insist every day on a chapter out of English history, another of Roman, another of French, besides grammar, geography, and so on. There is nothing like cramming, as we used to say at Oxford."

He had very little intention, however, of putting this into practice.

"Was it that your regiment was ordered home?" asked Evelyn, feeling curious on this point.

"No, I have sold out, as there was no active service; and my mother's health being in a bad way, she was anxious to have me at home. Then she and Letitia are desirous I should settle down, and go into Parliament. There is a borough open to me at the present moment; but I don't soar Parliamentwards. I am too much of the soldier to turn statesman all in a moment; so I don't think I shall avail myself of the offer which the honest voters have made me. I will make my cousin, Lord Thalberg, go in instead. He has quite as much stake in the county as I have; and I'm sure he'll like it well enough."

"Oh! I remember Sherbruce so well!" said Evelyn. Sherbruce was the seat of the Earl of Sherbruce, Lord Thalberg's father, and Lady Elizabeth's brother. "And Manor Melleray, too. I wonder is it all the same!"

"Is *what* all the same?"

“Manor Melleray—the wood and the old castle, that was built in King John’s reign, and where the family used to live a great many years ago ; so old Davy Green told me, and *his* mother told him ; and then the Lacken, with the nice old wooden bridge over it ; and I wonder were the sheep sheared every year since ? I thought it such a pity for them to lose their nice woolly coats.”

“You must satisfy yourself on these points when you go there, as I have not spent much time at home since my return. Is not that Mrs. Cunningham up there, and—by Jove !—beckoning to us, too. She will not like to hear that she is to lose her pupil. Let us go to her.”

CHAPTER II.

LADY ELIZABETH.

It was night at Manor Melleray, and there were lights all over the house, and especially home-like looked Lady Elizabeth’s own small, luxurious sitting-room ; with a cheerful fire in the grate, and wax-lights all about, and a supper of cold meat, and dainty sweetmeats, and luscious fruits, and rare old wines, on the table. The blinds were drawn, and low, comfortable easy-chairs were drawn near the fire, as if for expected visitors, and a great dog lay stretched on the hearthrug in indolent content.

At one side of the mantel-piece, reclining at full length on a couch, that was arranged so that she had the full benefit of the fire, and holding a hand-screen before her face, was Lady Elizabeth. She was very pale, and had black eyes and black eye-lashes, in startling contrast with her hair, which was snowy white, neatly smoothed over the calm, unwrinkled forehead. There was a strangely pathetic look about the white hair ; there was a mournful, appealing expression in the dark, deeply-sunken eyes ; there was the evidence of long-endured pain in the pallid but composed face, which fastened your sympathies at once. An air of refinement hung about her, too ; not only the refinement of high birth, and grand associations, but that which springs from a pure, elevated mind, long withdrawn from contact with the rough outer world, and accustomed to study its own history, and to weigh the right and wrong of every question, with, perhaps, a too-minute justice ; and it had become so spiritualised, so incapable of a coarse, or a common, or a vulgar idea, that she shrank, with an almost morbid fastidiousness from anything which could offend her in this way. But she was not likely to be so offended, for her delicate health made her a complete recluse, seldom venturing, except in the dead heat of summer, to go out into the noble old park that surrounded her dwelling, and so condemned for the autumn and winter, and spring

months to a *voyage autour de la chambre*, it is not surprising that she should gain that soft, white, spiritual appearance, like one who had a glimpse of something that is not of earth. There was a fascination about the gentle invalid. So may have looked that beautiful Elizabeth of Hungary, whose history Mrs. Jameson sketches, when—husband, and children, and crown lost—she was delivered up to the tender mercies of the inhuman Conrad; and allowed those dire punishments and penances to be inflicted on her, after a life whose purity, and charity, and goodness could scarcely be equalled by any here below. Perhaps, when Luis said “*Ich will mein Elsbeth haben*,” to her faithful old Walther, could he have foreseen all that she was to suffer afterwards, he would have preferred to comply with his mother’s wish, and send her back to King Andreas, her father, for he loved his fair young bride with an exceeding great love. We can imagine how Elizabeth looked at that period of her life, when her cruel confessor was wont to impose the actual lash as a penance on the holy landgravine. We can picture the resigned, peaceful expression, the heavenward look, the meek, lowly attitude, the divine calm, shining like a halo round that emaciated face!

And—perhaps in a much less degree—something of that peace and holiness was perceptible in Lady Elizabeth. Involuntarily, your step became soft and slow approaching her, your voice sank to a whisper, your tones took their tenderest, addressing her. She seemed so like a saint, so inoffensive, so sacred—sacred with the sanctity of grief. She was still in deep mourning, although it was five years since her husband, Captain Levison, died; but that event had not faded out of the invalid’s mind. Her dress was a thick black silk, and she wore a widow’s cap. Her hands were very white and beautiful; one held the fragile toy that screened her face from the fire; the other was stroking the dog’s shaggy head, that was laid up against the sofa.

“Surely they will soon be here, friend Sultan,” she murmured, in a soft, musical voice, “or you and I shall become quite uneasy. Eh, won’t we? and we’ll stay awake all night, thinking—thinking that we must wait another long day. Ah! but you do not know what a sleepless night is, Sultan, and you don’t care whether little Linnie comes home or not; and you are thinking you would like your supper soon, if you were not too lazy to go and seek it. Well, Sultan, we all know what is best for ourselves, and I fancy the merry voice of the little Indian minor would do one a world of good.”

She chatted softly to the dog as if they two were the only occupants of the room, and yet there was one other. A lady stood at the other side of the fire, with her arm resting on the broad

marble mantel-shelf, with features like Mr. Levison's, but colder, and hautier-looking, and devoid of the intelligence and life which gave a manly attraction to his. Her hair was fair; of that colour that the French called *blonde cendré*, and her face pale, and not so handsome as her brother's, but there was a lady-like, still composure over it, which gave it what they call an aristocratic character—a *de haut en bas* air, and she looked younger than he, although, in fact, she was a couple of years older. The resemblance was only in feature and height, the mouth was small and firm, and the nose equally classical, and the forehead broad and low—lower than his; but there the likeness ceased, for her complexion was fair, and his dark as olive, and her eyes were not at all as fine, being a light blue, and almost expressionless; whilst her brother's were of that indescribable darkness which almost seem capable of taking a different shade with every change of feeling, and were piercing and full of fire and penetration; and his whole face had power, and intellect, and life in it, which could never be said of hers. She stood motionless, looking dreamily into the cheerful blaze, the jewels on the hand that toyed with her watch-guard, sparkling fitfully in the fire-light. She was a fine figure, the dark purple velvet dress, suiting well her fair complexion, fitted tightly to her waist, and fell to the floor in heavy folds, and lay in a rich train on the leopard-skin rug.

For more than half-an-hour not one word passed between those two ladies, and then there came the sound of carriage-wheels in the avenue outside. Lady Elizabeth glanced up hastily, and said, nervously, "Oh Letitia, they have come!" then she sank back on the sofa, her face turning a shade paler. Letitia threw a sharp glance at her mother; the next moment her eyes were again turned on the fire, and she did not stir nor speak. A little while more passed in silence. The dog had stood up, and gone over to the door, and went noiselessly to and fro before it, but without making any sound, beyond a low whine of impatience. The stillness, and luxurious ease of the place was over him; he knew it was not fitting he should caper frantically, or bark loudly with joy, at the return of his master. At last the door was thrown open. Mr. Levison entered with his ward Evelyn Dormer. She looked pale, and a little nervous; her companion busied himself stroking and quieting Sultan, who, no longer restrained by feminine influence, was expressing a welcome in the demonstrative way natural to animals of the canine species: whilst his sister came forward, and took the young girl's hand, and said, gently, "You are very welcome," as if it was only a week since she had seen her last, whereas it was exactly three years. Arthur Levison went straight to his mother, and stooped and kissed her forehead, and bending

over her, spoke a few words in a low, soft voice, that seemed inexpressibly pleasing to her; for there was a yearning, gratified expression in the mournful eyes turned up to him. But few could understand the delight Arthur Levison's simplest words gave to his mother. She hung upon them, as if they rained rubies. His long absence had not diminished this influence. He had written to her constantly, and his letters were the next best thing to his presence. He was her all, her world. When her husband died, it had seemed to her that her life was done; but after the first, bitter, uncontrollable grief, the dim belief broke on her that there was still left to her something worth living for. She had her son, and in him was concentrated all the hopes and pleasures that remained possible after Captain Levison's death. She had striven to keep him with her when his regiment was ordered to India; but at that time there was something to be done, and he would not be backward, although by his father's death he had just come into property of fifteen thousand a year; and it was with mingled pride and regret that she saw him depart. It can therefore be understood, that his return caused her no slight pleasure; and the sweetest gratification in it was, that it was done for her. She knew that he loved his profession, that he was a soldier to his inmost heart, that he had distinguished himself highly, and would win an Indo-English reputation if he might still wield his sword; but she had weakly allowed her woman longings and desires to appear in her letters, and had hinted at the possibility of her near death, and sighed on paper to see her son once more; and so he sold out and came home. And she was to have him with her henceforth, and might feast her eyes on the dear, manly figure, and find renewed life in the dark-hued face that never once looked coldly or gloomily on her.

But now Evelyn was approaching the couch. Lady Elizabeth half rose, and looked at her, at first wonderingly, doubtingly, then with a more searching glance; then a bright, eager smile lit up the pallid face. The seat was low, and Evelyn slipped down on her knees, and was clasped in the lady's arms in a long and fervent embrace.

"My own little Linnie still," she murmured, kissing her repeatedly. Evelyn buried her face in her bosom, and when she looked up, tears were standing in her bright eyes, and yet she was smiling. And Arthur Levison saw those tears, for he had kept his position by his mother.

"Are you tired, Evelyn?" asked the invalid, tenderly, after a silent pause, a very expressive one.

"No, madam."

Lady Elizabeth stroked the soft cheek, and looked reproachfully into her eyes.

"It is not to be 'madam,' " and then she waited until Evelyn, with a soft smile, whispered—

"No, mother."

"That is right, darling. And now sit here by me. But first you must go and get rid of this hat and cloak." She had been guilty of entering the room in her travelling attire. Lady Elizabeth untied the hat and took it off, whilst she still knelt before her.

"The same eyes, and the same hair; but it used to hang in great thick curls, little Linnie—long curls that I could play with."

"Mrs. Cunningham says I am too big for curls now," she replied, with the least little spice of conscious importance in her tone, which caused two of her listeners to smile.

"You are indeed very much grown, but in other respects there is no change in my little pet. Eh! what do you think, Arthur?"

"Oh, Mr. Levison did not know me in the least," said Evelyn, briskly; "he says I am dreadfully changed."

"Dreadfully, indeed!"

"It is a school-girl's exaggeration, mother," said he. "She told me it was a hundred years since Letitia went to see her;" then not forgetting that his mother had asked him a question, he added, "whatever change there is, I think it is outwardly. It seems to me there is a good deal of the Linnie of long ago in Miss Evelyn Dormer."

She looked up in a puzzled way, as if she wanted to find out, was this meant as a compliment, or the reverse; but Lady Elizabeth threw a quick smiling glance at her son, and they understood each other.

All this time Letitia had remained looking on, without a change in her calm, inexpressive face; but now she rang the bell, and when the servant appeared, directed him to send her own maid to take Miss Dormer to her room. And in a few minutes a smart abigail presented herself, and Evelyn went with her, unaccompanied by Letitia, although her mother looked as if she expected it. Two rooms were prepared for Evelyn, fires and wax lights in both; and the pale, blue silk drapery; the soft, snowy-white rugs; the glittering China; the perfume of flowers; the warmth, and luxury, and refinement,—were all very delicious after Bird's-nest House. Declining the maid's help, and telling her that she would find her way back to the pink drawing-room—(why it was called the pink drawing-room is a problem, for it was in rich crimson; but perhaps it had formerly been decked in that milder hue)—without her guidance, Evelyn, as soon as she was left alone, threw off her wrappings, then went to the window, opened it, and looked out. The moon was rising, and innumerable stars twinkled brightly in the deep, dark blue. The park of Manor Melleray was visible—a great

part of it—in that clear starlight, mingled with the faint radiance of the young moon. In the distance, but enclosed in the demesne, was the wood she so well remembered, with the turrets of the old castle showing, above the trees, against the brilliant background of starlit sky; and at the east of the house was a long, white line, winding through the beech groves, with the moonbeams dancing on its swift waters, which she knew was the Lacken; and she rejoiced at the sight, for it was so pleasant to find everything the same. Nearer were graceful lawns, and winding, romantic walks, intersecting the thick copses; and shadowy glades, and clusters of noble trees, every one of which seemed as familiar, in that mysterious light, as if she had only seen them last year. Then Evelyn glanced back into the elegant rooms, and whispered to herself—

“Oh! it is all so beautiful, and I am to stay here always, and it is so much nicer than Bird’s-nest House. But, I wonder, am I to live here always?” and with a short little sigh, she took up the Sevres candlestick, which the servant had laid on the toilet-table. It seemed such a waste of light to have brought that in where there were so many wax candles already burning.

“What would Mrs. Cunningham say to such extravagance? It was delf ones we had at Bird’s-nest; but I don’t think it is that that makes the difference. I think it is because she loves me so very much still, and I am to call her ‘mother;’ and, oh! isn’t she beautiful! And then my guardian—but, goodness me! I don’t know what to think about him *yet*.”

That expressed it exactly. He paralysed her; and she was not prepared to tell her thoughts of him, even to herself. When she went to take leave of her school companions—after Mrs. Cunningham had been given to understand that her pupil was to leave her—they besieged her with inquiries about him.

“Is that your guardian, Evelyn? Oh! he is quite a young man. You’ll have jolly times! He’ll let you do what you like—have dogs and horses, and won’t care a fig how much recreation you take. It is well to be you, Evelyn: you won’t be bothered with lessons any longer.”

“Indeed, you’re quite mistaken,” she replied, disconsolately; “he says I must study just as much as ever; that Mrs. Cunningham thinks I ought. I wish she hadn’t gone, and told him so, and he’ll hear me the things himself. Fancy!”

“Oh, he only says that. He won’t stick long to that, I promise you. He’ll get tired of it. If it was an old fellow, now, it would be different, for he’d have nothing else to do; but young men, you see, are for ever hunting, and shooting, and running about here and there, and officers especially, are dreadful for that, I know, for my cousins, the Ringwoods, are as wild as wild can be!”

"But how do you know Mr. Levison is that sort? All I can say is," added Evelyn, dolefully, "he is awfully sharp, and looks through one like anything; and I think he is fond of laughing at one too. Goodness gracious! I wonder what sort of letters were those I used to write to him. I never fancied he was the kind he is. I wish I had them all back safe again!"

"Oh, he lit his cigars with them, long ago, never fear! But I say, Evelyn, he is awfully handsome, and so tall, and *such* a walk! He is like Hector, for all the world, or like Paris—no, but Achilles! I shouldn't wonder if you fell in love with him. I would, I know. Won't you write and tell me if you do?" said her most particular friend, a very harum-scarum one, too, by name, Miss Joanna Thersiter.

"Oh, how can you talk such nonsense, and I going to bid you good-bye?" said the young girl, the tears standing in her eyes. "I don't think you're half as sorry for me as I am for you. But there he is, I declare, coming down the avenue; and now Mrs. Cunningham will be sending for me, and I must be off. Oh, good-bye, Joe! I'll never, *never* forget you!" And here followed a round of kissing, in which all the Janes, and Marys, and Claras, and Nellies, and Isabels received a dozen each at least; and then Mrs. Cunningham and the teachers had to be taken leave of, and the gardener and the servants, and finally the little cherub, Pidgie, who cried for fully five minutes after the last kiss, and was only restored to cheerfulness by the present of an enormous lump of sugar, bestowed on her by Mrs. Cunningham, herself not unmoved by that parting with her favourite pupil. Half-an-hour afterwards, Evelyn was stepping into a first-class carriage at the Wearmouth Station, accompanied by her guardian. He was very attentive and kind, and took care to give her two good rests on the journey, the last place they stopped at being London, where they had dinner at seven o'clock in a fine hotel, and this delayed them for a late train to Darneath, which was the station nearest to Manor Melleray. Just after they stepped into the carriage at London, two gentlemen entered it—one a young man, and she guessed he must be a brother officer of her guardian's, for the latter called him Fred, and shook hands with him warmly. And they had some talk about Oude and Simla, and shooting in the hills, and garrison life. The other was known to him too; he was Sir George something—she did not catch the surname. He was elderly, spare, muscular, with a long, hooked nose, and a severe, aristocratic cast of countenance; but he was gracious-mannered, almost pleasant; and the three gentlemen kept talking continually all the way, but, with the rattling of the train, she could not hear much of what they said. She was able to learn, however, that they were going to some country-house, called

Thanesby, and they asked Mr. Levison, "Was he going too?" and he said, "Not at present; but that he would be apt to meet them there." They got out at the station next before Darneath; and when the train was slackening for this place, she distinctly heard the younger of the two strangers ask, "I say, Levison, what about the little ward that used to write the letters to you? Is that her?" lowering his voice, and actually jerking his head towards herself. She had escaped an introduction to them, by perching herself in the farthest corner of the carriage, and remaining there, but nevertheless she heard this. Her guardian glanced towards her, and smiled, and she coloured up at once, which with the lamplight they could easily see; so she looked vigorously out of the window into the dark, where everybody knew she could see nothing, except dark, flying, indescribable objects, suggesting all manner of terrific things in the deep gloom of night. "It was so very saucy of the young fellow to ask such a question!" But when they were gone, she could not help saying, "I didn't write to him, I am sure;" to which he replied, "No, of course not; but you are not aware that the officers of a regiment are like the members of one family, and have no secrets from each other, and show their letters to each other, the friends of one being the friends of the rest; so that you are as well known to all the captains, and lieutenants, and ensigns, as you are to me." But the look on his face told her she was not to take this for gospel, so she merely shook her head, to show that she did not believe it, and made no further remark about the saucy young man. And this it was which made her say, in her own room at Manor Melleray, that, as to her guardian, she did not well know what to think about him. Deep in thought, she was about to leave the room, when she suddenly recollected something, and went back to the glass on the toilet-table.

"I was forgetting to tidy my hair, and to put on a collar; and wouldn't I look funny going in *there* without one!"

She took out of her own little reticule a neat linen collar, and cuffs to match—thoughtfully put in it by Miss Somers, in order that she might not have to wait for her trunks to be opened; but before assuming those, she took down her hair, and settled it up again with more care than usual; then put on the collar, and took a good long look at herself. She wore a simple brown merino dress, that, somehow, struck her for the first time as being very plain.

"I know Lady Elizabeth won't like my dress," said Evelyn to herself; and yet, fitting tightly to her slim, girlish figure, it did not look so very badly, with the snowy collar and cuffs, not one whit more fair than her neck and hands; and her abundant gold-brown hair, arranged in a becoming style of her own, drawn back off the

pink little ears, and wreathing the back of her head with its silky coils. She did not seem to perceive that it was a very pretty picture that was represented in the mirror; for, turning away with anything but a triumphant air, she opened the door, and tripped along the passage, then down a flight of steps, and along another corridor, until she came to the door of the pink drawing-room; and here she hesitated, for the feeling of nervousness came over her again. She owned she was not related to any one of those three, and she had an awe of Letitia, and was timid and bashful with her guardian; but the thought of Lady Elizabeth restored her courage, and when she entered the room, her kindly smile and beckoning hand made her feel at home at once. And then they all sat down to supper; Evelyn at Lady Elizabeth's side, and the liver-wing of a fowl, and various other choice morsels, were picked out for her, and some delicious fruit; and under the force of her new mother's repeated opinion that it would be good for her, she drank one whole glass of Amontillado, wondering, meanwhile, at its extraordinary taste, so different from the three-shilling sherry she had been treated to on rare occasions at Birds'-nest House; and leaving them to discuss that pleasant meal, I will make known to my readers how Evelyn Dormer had come to be a member of the Manor Melleray household.

Fourteen years' before, Captain Levison had brought home to his wife, from India, a baby girl, then between one and two years' old, and what he told her of the child's parentage was this. An intimate friend of his, Colonel Dormer, to whom he was greatly attached, for they had long served together, had a very young and beautiful wife, on whom he ardently doted, and she had seemed to be quite as much attached to him. But they had been only eighteen months' married, when she disappeared suddenly—mysteriously. No trace of her was to be found, and at the very same time a native soldier was missing. Colonel Dormer's troopers scoured the whole country round Calcutta, but neither was ever found. And then things came to light which spoke badly for the beautiful young wife. This very man had been seen hovering about Colonel Dormer's house, and she had been seen speaking to him by more than one of her husband's servants. He almost went mad. He refused even to look at the child again, and in pure charity Captain Levison took charge of it. He was just then about to embark for England, as his health was greatly impaired by the climate; and he said he would give the little thing up to his wife's care—that she would be sure to receive her with tenderness. And Colonel Dormer was very thankful for this, and he gave him fifteen thousand pounds, which had been his wife's fortune, and which he disdained to keep, to be held in trust for Evelyn, so that she

would not be altogether a pauper on his friend's hands. But the latter placed the money in the bank, and allowed the interest to swell the bulk, and he and his wife adopted the poor little girl for their own child. Lady Elizabeth received her with the greatest tenderness, and she soon became the pet of the household; for Arthur was a big boy, of fourteen at the time, and Letitia was almost a young woman; and everybody combined to pet and spoil the little stranger. The Captain himself was the only one who treated her with anything like common sense; for, knowing the blood that was in her veins, he dreaded, above all things, that she might become vain, capricious, and frivolous. Like his wife, he loved her with quite a paternal feeling, and was naturally anxious about her future. So, a year before his death, he gave her in charge to two maiden sisters, who lived at Slanebridge, and who kept a small school for the "daughters of the gentry;" but having learned afterwards that the climate was bad, he desired his son, when he was dying, to remove her from that, and find some more healthy place, and more cheerful house and surroundings.

It was then he appointed him her guardian, and the fortune, which was increasing with the yearly interest, was vested in his name, in conjunction with a Mr. Braemer's. The good man also requested that Evelyn should be left at least five years at school, in order to be well disciplined, as he said; for his gentle, tender wife, would not be able to exert much control over her, and Arthur would be away with his regiment. He thought that the pleasant, luxurious atmosphere of Manor Melleray would not be the best in the world for a girl who had had such a mother, and he even hinted that it would be well to select a strict, impartial person as teacher, if such was to be found—which, however, the young man did not find in Mrs. Cunningham. When his father died, Arthur placed the little girl under her care, and soon after that his regiment was ordered to India.

TRAITS AND ANECDOTES OF SIR WILLIAM NAPIER

HIS YOUTH.

"TRUEST friend and noblest foe" was William Napier. One of a group raised from among the mediæval dead, and set in the midst of us clothed in a temperament which admitted all the ameliorating influences of our modern period of civilisation. Brought up in an Irish country town, Sir William Napier, though best known in after life as a writer of history, owed as little as possible to the education of the schoolmaster. If, according to Dogberry, reading and writing are the gifts of nature, spelling certainly is not, and Sir William Napier never wholly acquired the art; but nature gave him a mind eager and energetic, ardour of noble thought and feeling which found its vent in eloquence of word and action, a heart warm and constant, a person strong and beautiful. Perhaps the schoolroom might have but cramped his growth; our shrubberies need culture and dressing, our oaks only want space.

And a boy who, before he had left the nursery, saw his home attacked by a mob in the absence of his parents, and his nurse standing at the door with two loaded pistols while she sent for assistance; and who, before he was twelve years old, was, with his four brothers, armed by their father for the defence of that home which was regularly fortified against the Irish rebels of 1798, was not likely to want military spirit. He was fond of books too. Though not crammed with grammar, and lexicon, as a boy he read all that came in his way, devouring Plutarch's Lives with special eagerness. Through life he seized on a new book with a boyish appetite.

In the year 1800, when he was only fourteen, William Napier received a commission in the Royal Irish Artillery. Four years later Sir John Moore got him a company in the 43rd regiment, then forming part of his own brigade. He served in the Copenhagen in 1807, and the following year joined the army under Sir John Moore, in Spain. The young soldier is thus described by his biographer:—"Quite wild with animal spirits and strong health, brimming over with fun, joking with his comrades, racing, jumping, swimming with his men, studying Napoleon's campaigns with his friend Lloyd, poring over the lives of real and fictitious heroes, and the writings of ancient and modern philosophers, and astonishing all by his wonderful memory; raging at any story of oppression, melting in pity at any tale of misfortune, with a fondness for

animals amounting almost to a passion, and delighting to observe indications of character, even in a bird or a kitten, this strong, tender, handsome, and gifted man, surrounded by so many temptations, passionately admiring beauty in women, was yet never known to be otherwise than pure in thought and deed, by comrades who lived with him in all the intimacy of barrack-life, and this, too, at a time when society was far more indulgent than it is now. It is a beautiful and noble picture."

William Napier was his own schoolmaster, studying the campaigns both of ancients and moderns by the aid of the best maps and plans, and occupying his leisure in drawing and painting, for which he had decided talent. So excellent was his memory that he could repeat the whole of Pope's translation of Homer; and such was his self-control that, though he excelled in billiard-playing, he gave it up entirely lest it should become too engrossing.

HIS CAMPAIGNS.

CAPTAIN NAPIER had the reckless daring of his race. He took more than his share of the hardships and perils of Sir John Moore's disastrous retreat, but the dangers of his own service do not seem to have satisfied him. In 1808, being at Vigo, on board the "Hindustan," hearing of a secret enterprise to cut out a Prussian frigate, moored in the harbour, with boardings, fittings, and all things ready to meet an attack, he borrowed a sailor's dress and ship's cutlass, and was with the seamen in the boats when the Commodore relinquished the attempt as too hazardous.

At the "bitter fight," on the Coa, Captain Napier was shot in the left hip, but continued with his regiment until in the combat of Casal Novo, he received a bullet, which, never being extracted, caused him, through the remainder of his life, many days and nights of agony. In this same fight, his brother George had his arm broken by a bullet, while carrying his wounded sabalturn off the field under a heavy fire. In his life of Sir Charles Napier, Sir William thus describes the day:—"Combat followed combat, the light division led in pursuit, and Charles Napier, with his wound still bandaged,* rode about ninety miles on one horse, and in one course, to reach the army. His regiment being with the main body, he heard each morning the ever-recurring sounds of the light division's combats in front, and had hourly to ask of wounded men if his brother were still alive. Thus advancing, on the fourth of March, he met a litter of branches, borne by soldiers and covered with a blanket. "What wounded officer is that?" "Captain Napier, of the 52nd—a broken limb." Another litter followed. "Who is

* He had been wounded in the face at Busaco.

that?" "Captain Napier, 43rd, mortally wounded,"—it was thought so then. Charles Napier looked at them, and passed on to the front.

"The four Napiers," said General Brotherton, "in the field were no bad specimens of the race! Well do I remember the intense anxiety of each, not for himself, but for the brother in danger."

After Sir William Napier's death, Sir John Morillyon Wilson thus wrote to his biographer:—"My first interview with my dear departed friend, Sir William Napier, was on the battle field of Cazal Noval. We were advancing towards the enemy, when I saw an officer stretched on the ground, beneath an olive tree. Believing him to be either dead or badly wounded, I ran towards him and said, 'Can I be of any service to you?' He shook his head, but did not utter a word. He looked deadly pale, and I was deeply impressed with the classical outline and beautiful expression of his handsome countenance. I told him I had some cold tea and brandy in my flask, and asked him if I should give him a little of it, at which he raised his head, a sudden beam of pleasure sparkled in his eyes—he stretched out his hand, and I gave him a tumbler full, which he drank with a most interesting expression of unexpected enjoyment—so much so that I gave him a second dose: and when he had finished it, he seized my hand and grasped it several times. . . I then said 'Heaven protect you!' and ran away to join my company. I had not the slightest knowledge who he was, and amidst the firing and excitement I did not notice his uniform. I never met him again till about sixteen years afterwards. I was then on a visit to Lady Wilson's father, when dear Sir William dined there. After dinner, I was standing near the fireplace, the gentlemen were speaking of handsome men, and I said of all the handsome men I had ever seen, in the various parts of the world where I had been, there was none at all to be compared with *the one* whom I then described as above written. Napier sprang from his chair, put his arm round me, and exclaimed, 'My dear Wilson, was that you? that glass of tea and brandy saved my life!' and a few tears trickled from his bright, animated eyes, expressive of his grateful recollection of the good service I had rendered him in that hour of his need and painful suffering."

Captain Napier was ordered to England for the recovery of his health, at the end of the year, and the following spring (1812), married Caroline Amelia Fox, who for forty-eight years was, as he says, his "wife, and friend, and everything," and then died within six weeks of him.

Still far from well, and only three weeks married, he hastened back to the Peninsula, but was too late for the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo. His most intimate friend, Macleod was dead, and his affectionate heart was wrung with agony. "Every one says," he

writes, "that I am most fortunate to have the command of such a regiment; for my part, I only find that the recollection of Macleod comes with more bitterness to my mind. What comfort or pleasure can I have in filling the place that belonged to him?" Friendship was a passion to his vehement nature. When he heard of the death of his friend Lloyd, he threw himself on the ground, and cried like a boy. Knowing no fear, caring for no hardships, always foremost in the field, he yet keenly felt the horrors of war. "I am a soldier," he writes, "unfitted for any other profession, and yet I took up my present one lightly and without consideration. I detest it; we are but licensed murderers, and the most brutal and ferocious sentiments are constantly expressed, and actions of the same stamp constantly committed. . . . It is the more incumbent on me to serve my country in that profession I am most capable of, to prevent the same scenes from taking place at home." "The nature of war is misery;" and in another letter, "nothing ought to make me continue in the army but the necessity of defending my country."

He served in the Peninsula for the remainder of the campaign, but when every one thought that all fighting was over, he obtained leave to go to England for medical advice, and thus missed the battle of Toulouse.

At the termination of the campaign, he received the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel, and joined the military college at Fareham. The alarm of war interrupted his studies; and on the terrible 18th of June, 1815, he embarked at Dover to join his regiment in Belgium. He did not know what was being enacted at Waterloo. Thus his fiery spirit was chafed by being a third time too late for a fierce contest.

On the return of the army of occupation, in 1819, Colonel Napier went on half-pay. After having been thirty times engaged, having gained two steps and three decorations in the field of battle, and received three wounds—one of them so severe as to leave him for the remainder of his days only a miserable existence—although lieutenant-colonel by brevet, he was still only regimental major.

HIS RETIREMENT.

From henceforth politics were his arena, literature was his work, painting and sculpture his amusement, his family his motive and his joy.

After a few years spent in a desultory manner, he prepared to bend all his energies to his great work—"The History of the Peninsula War." Of its commencement, he says:—"It was all owing to Lord Langdale I ever wrote that history; he first kindled the fire in me. I was living in Sloane Street, on half-pay; and, for the time, just leading a very pleasant desultory life, enjoying my home

and friends in London, dining out, going to the exhibitions, and talking to the officers I had known in the Peninsula—to Chantry and Jones, and so forth, and painting a great deal. I had never written anything except that review of Jomini's '*Principes de la Guerre*', when, soon after it appeared, I was walking one day with Bickersteith (afterwards Lord Langdale) in some fields, now built over, and forming part of Belgravia, and he asked me what I was thinking of doing. I thought he meant where I was going to dine that day, but he said, No, what was I thinking of turning to as an occupation? And then he went on to urge me to undertake some literary work, telling me I had powers of writing yet undeveloped—that the review proved it to him—that I must not waste my life in mere pleasantness; and he urged me so seriously and so strongly, suggesting the late war as my province, that it began to make me think whether I would not try, and what he said about not wasting my powers made a great impression upon me."

His wife encouraged him, and for the next sixteen years he worked laboriously at this undertaking, collecting materials and sifting evidence with indefatigable and characteristic industry—Mrs. Napier being his able and affectionate assistant. Of the style of this history, J. Sterling says, "There is no great quality in which it is deficient. It has ease, animation, brevity, correctness, and vigour, and these, taken together, in a greater degree than any other historical writer of English except Raleigh and Hallam."

At the commencement of this work, Colonel Napier left London, and went to live at Freshford, near Bath. Here he might be seen digging in his garden, dressed in a smock-frock, taking long walks through the country, or visiting in person the cottages of the poor. He was well known among the poor of Freshford, and beloved by them. Long after, when he resided in Guernsey, a maid-servant, returning from Freshford, brought him and Mrs. Napier a present of a large basket of apples, containing one from every garden in the village, as a token of affectionate gratitude.

One of his daughters tells the following anecdote of him:—"He was one day taking a long walk near Freshford, when he met a little girl, about five years old, sobbing over a broken bowl. She had dropped and broken it in bringing it back from the fields, to which she had taken her father's dinner in it, and she said she should be beaten on her return home for having broken it. Then, with a sudden gleam of hope, she innocently looked up into his face, and said, 'But ye can mend it, can't ye?' My father exclaimed that he could not mend the bowl, but the trouble he could, by the gift of sixpence to buy another. However, on opening his purse, he found it empty of silver, and he had to make amends by promising to meet his little friend at the same spot and the same hour the

next day, and to bring the sixpence with him. The child entirely trusted him, and went on her way home. On his return home, he found an invitation awaiting him to dine in Bath the following evening, to meet some one whom he specially wished to see. He hesitated for some little time, trying to calculate the possibility of giving the meeting to his little friend of the broken bowl, and of still being in time for the dinner-party in Bath; but finding that this could not be, he wrote to decline accepting the invitation; on the plea of a pre-engagement, saying to us, 'I cannot disappoint her, she trusted me so implicitly.' "

Gentle to the weak, he was undoubtedly rugged to the rough. At this time reform and the new poor-law violently agitated the nation, and the Napier temper was not one to look quietly on. As the champion of the poor and the oppressed, Sir William took an intense interest in these questions. Though he several times refused a seat in Parliament from want of means, he was often before the public as speaker and writer. Unquestionably the temper he displayed was hot. He thus *naïvely* describes knocking a man down on the hustings at Bath:—"A Whig partizan, a great miller and corn-dealer, called out that I *lied* in asserting that the Whigs had encouraged insurrection. I answered, 'Sir, you know not what you say; I have the proof in my pocket.' 'That's a lie also,' was the reply; whereupon I knocked him backwards with a blow on the face. He prosecuted me, but dared not go through the trial."

In July, 1841, Colonel Napier became Major General, and in February, 1842, was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey. Here his keen sense of justice, and zeal for the reform of abuses, as well as his fiery temper, kept him in continual hot water and disputes with the royal court. It is pleasanter to regard him in his family circle, where he inspired the most ardent affection and reverence. In a letter when absent from home he says, "How I do love my girls! I never know which I love best—the one that writes or talks to me." Of one daughter he says on another occasion, "In my life I have never seen a more exquisite piece of humanity within the bounds of every-day life." When she married, her father's grief at parting was terrible to witness. After she had left him, her husband, returning to say some forgotten words, found him sank down on the floor in agony. General Napier had but one son, and he was deaf and dumb.

From the time that Sir Charles Napier received the command in India, his brother's life was devoted to sympathetic interest in his career, and to vindication of his fame. Once when in a sudden and unusually severe attack of his ordinary painful disease, Sir William thought himself dying, mingled with groans of pain, he uttered the most touching expressions of love and admiration for his brother,

and entreaties and commands to his family that his papers should be published, and everything done to clear his name from blame.

In November, 1844, General Napier published the first part of the History of the Conquest of Scinde. His devotion to his brother's fame partook of the vehemence of his character. He was indeed a "hero-worshipper." His admiration was never given by halves, but it was not bestowed only on the great hero of his own family; he had a niche also for the great rivals, Napoleon and Wellington; and at the death of each of them he mourned passionately. On the first of January, 1848, General Napier resigned his office of Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey, and soon after was made K.C.B.

HIS OLD AGE.

SIR WILLIAM NAPIER resided henceforth at Clapham, where with characteristic pride and affection, he called his residence Scinde House. Here he was visited and consulted by many leading men, on a variety of political and military questions. His infirmities increased, and health failed. He felt his wounds much, and was subject to frequent and painful attacks of illness. He could no longer walk or ride, but, to the last, took delight in carriage exercise.

One of his daughters thus writes of him :—"It dwells on my mind as a prominent trait in his character, the manner in which he would look out for little children on the road, the delight, tender and keen, which he took in watching them happy and amused; his vexation, anger, or terror, if he saw them neglected, ill-used, or in danger. His notice of animals also, as well as his habit of watching picturesque effects of light and shade, of forms in clouds, trees, and all else belonging to artist pleasure in nature, and of explaining the country in a military point of view, made his drives a keen pleasure to him and to his companions, till within a very few months of his death.

"He used always to stop the carriage, or even turn, if he saw beggars whom he thought in real distress, and give to them, especially if there were children.

"Nothing annoyed my father so much with us when children as want of civility or courtesy to those below us. He did not like us to forget to answer, by gesture or word, any of the poor people's salutations as they passed us. He always taught us to be particular in our demeanour towards the aged and the infirm, and always made us step aside to let pass any one who bore a burden, saying, "It is for you to let them pass; you should not give them the trouble of getting out of your way; they have enough to do without that." His love of children was remarkable from the time when quite a

young man. He shaved off a fine pair of moustaches because his little girl was afraid to kiss him. Often, in company, children would entirely absorb him. He enjoyed thoroughly a romp with them. He says in one of his letters, "I think I should like very much to be cast away on a fertile island with about a hundred children." Much of his time at Clapham was devoted to labours on behalf of old soldiers. To see an old 43rd man was a real delight; and when he was laid helpless on his sick bed, his hands distorted and crippled from the effects of his long suffering, if a 22nd man called who had fought at Meeance or Dabaon in the Hill campaign, he would send for him, and say it was always a pleasure to him to see and honour a brave soldier, and especially one who had served under his brother, and that, crippled as he was, he must shake hands with him. Notwithstanding his high animal spirits, it is impossible for the reader of Sir W. Napier's life and letters not to perceive throughout a tone of melancholy—sometimes even gloom—an unsatisfied craving. Why was this, but because, looking on religion from the outside, he respected, but did not enter in and enjoy it? There is a short and interesting, though unsatisfactory correspondence with the Rev. Archer Gurney, arising from a kindly review by Mr. Gurney of Sir William's life of his brother. Mr. Gurney's appeal in the name of "The Master whose name is Love," Sir William evades, but he says, "My own religious opinions are founded on long-considered grounds. I am past seventy-two, and they do not shake." What those opinions are he does not say. Mr. Gurney thus concludes:—"I rejoice that I should have misunderstood your reference to the Rock. That we may meet in a better world, cleansed and purified by the all-sufficient Sacrifice, is, and shall be (D.V.) the daily prayer of, dear sir," &c.

Sir William had been a great sufferer during the whole of 1858, but towards the end of the year the increase of illness became alarming. His brain appears to have been excited by opiates, and he talked incessantly for hours. All the subjects that had interested him in life, and the characters in ancient and modern history, seemed to pass in review before him. He spoke much of his own shortcomings, mentioning his passionate temper. "As I lie here," he said, "and think of my past life, I feel very small, very small indeed. I try to remember if I have done any good, but the evil far over-balances it. We shall be weighed in the balance and found wanting. In the eye of the great and good God, earthly goodness can have no proper existence, yet He sees and makes allowance for us all—giving more credit for good, and less blame for evil, than our fellow-creatures, harsh judging would have done. Men should strive after those priceless virtues of patience, wisdom, charity, self-sacrifice. In

looking back on my life, it would be a comfort to me if I could remember to have done a perfectly self-sacrificing act—if I could think I had been ready and willing at any moment to lay down my life for another person's good. I try to remember, but I can't remember that I ever did. I have often run into danger, and exposed myself sometimes to pain to save others. Yes, I have done that; but there has always been a springing hope, a sort of conviction, that I should escape, and that being so, away flies the merit. The nearest thing I ever did to absolute self-sacrifice was at Casal Noval, when I received in my back the ball that lies there still." How touching were such words from one in whose life and character we may all see so much to admire and to love! How sad that one so capable of deep and lively emotions did not find rest in responding to the gentle words, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."

While suffering acutely, the old soldier still showed consideration for the feelings of others. Once he betrayed some impatience towards his faithful attendant, George Gould, who, by some involuntary awkwardness, caused him severe pain. He could not rest, but grieved over it for half an hour, and would not be satisfied till a message had been taken to his servant, asking forgiveness.

He rallied from the attack, but never again left his bedroom, except to be carried to his carriage for drives. He continued, however, to dictate letters on politics, military subjects, volunteers, &c., till within a short time of his death.

On Sunday morning, the 12th of February, 1860, death approached. Lady Napier, who had been for some time dangerously ill, was wheeled into his room, on a sofa, and placed beside his bed. About four o'clock in the afternoon he breathed his last. In six weeks Lady Napier followed him.

MODERN FRENCH SOCIETY

THE extraordinary progress which France has made, both politically and commercially, under the Second Empire, has naturally led to important modifications in society. Whether this change be for the better or worse, is an open question: social economists may deplore the wide spread of extravagance, and opponents of the existing Government declare that France is slowly descending to the condition of the First Empire; but, for the present at any rate, fact contradicts theory. Louis Napoleon is powerful both at home and abroad; and though we were startled a few months ago by hearing of a Governmental deficit, France has something tangible to show in return, in the shape of an iron navy and a magnificently-appointed army. England, with a budget which everybody allows she cannot endure much longer, and with her navy once again in a state of transition, has at least no right to cast the first stone at France, or upbraid her with extravagant outlay.

There is no doubt, however, of one fact: when Louis Napoleon, apparently wishful to imitate Augustus, whose boast it was that he found Rome of brick, and left it of stone, began that wondrous transformation of his capital, which is now the admiration of the world, he aroused a taste for expenditure, which has gradually increased, and offered matter for many diatribes. And yet, from an English point of view, it is not so very terrible. Dumas *filis*, who selected this subject among the many he lashed on the stage, only allows his "prodigal papa" some two thousand pounds a year to be prodigal withal—a sum which would go but a very little way in our country, for a gentleman whose tastes inclined to Cremorne and the Argyll. If, again, we consult the writings of those who attack the prevailing mania for time-bargains, we find that the "odious example" is never credited with more than four thousand a year. We may, therefore, fairly come to the conclusion that the extravagance complained of in Paris will not be found so much among individuals as in a general tendency to display, which, after all, is not peculiar to France.

These thoughts have been suggested to us by the perusal of a curious volume* which appeared some time since in France. The author, Francis Wey, is well known as responsible for some peculiar works about England; and we believe was the first propounder of the fact, that at our dinner-tables the water-bottles were filled with gin, for the special behoof of our great ladies. Be that as it may,

* *Dick Moon en France*. "Journal d'un Anglais de Paris." Par FRANCIS WEY.
Paris: Hachette et Co.

he has acted wisely in telling his countrymen some home-truths under the disguise of a travelling Englishman. The idea is as old as the "Citizen of the World," but is generally effective. From his pages, then, we propose to cull a few illustrative passages, and thus throw a borrowed light on certain French institutions.

In judging modern French society, one great fact must not be let out of sight, that both in Paris and the provinces the majority of fortunes are posterior to the first Revolution: the old legal, financial, and commercial families died out, and left no mark. Without referring to the suppression of offices, and the confiscations decreed by the Republican Government, one fact, as M. Wey tells us, characterises better than any other the arbitrary despotism of ideas in that day:—

"A decree of the Convention suddenly reduced the price of merchandise 50 per cent., and compelled the dealers in addition to dispose of their goods for assignats, already depreciated to one-half their value. A refusal to sell led to the scaffold, and this was the law known as the *maximum*. It had results upon which history has not sufficiently dwelt. At that period everybody got rid of the assignats, which fell daily in value: money was rare and almost proscribed, and hence people flocked to the shops, in order to exchange their fictitious paper for some tangible value. The decree consequently forced the trader to sell for thirty francs what had cost him sixty; and the money he received was not worth thirty *sous*. This legal plunder drained all the stores, and turned their owners on the streets. In vain did these poor people try to get rid of their assignats in the same way, by buying oil and soap, for instance, when their own shops were gutted: the warehouses were empty, and the assignats worthless."

It was not till the end of the Consulate that regular commerce could be re-organised—for the manufacturers shared the same fate as their clients. Ruin and want were universal, and it required the protecting vigour of the Empire, which was called despotic, in order to cure the evils produced by a tyrannical brigandage, which was called Liberty. As M. Wey most truthfully observes, "Whenever the French think themselves free, they plunge into perils from which they can only be drawn by a Dictatorship." Moreover, the antagonism of classes produced by the first Revolution exists up to the present day. While the "High finance" and the middle classes were restoring their fortunes, the emigrés could only look forward to an indemnity, which was paid them, it is true, but was not sufficiently large to enable them to compete in luxury with the families which had sprung into a position through industry. During the reign of Louis Philippe a certain amalgamation took place between the two classes. Not alone did the nobility intermarry

with civilians, but their younger sons did not consider it derogatory to indulge in mercantile speculations. It was reserved, however, for the Second Empire to discover a species of speculation in which all classes could join, in the shape of enormous commercial undertakings, which were merely a convenient cloak for gambling.

During the whole period of transition, the tone of French society has degenerated; while in the higher circles the aristocratic ignorance of the Great Monarchy is maintained rigorously—that subtle essence known as the “*Esprit Français*,” and of which we possess such charming examples in the letters of Madame de Sevigné, has lost its perfume. According to our satirist, the only way by which a visitor can make himself appreciated by Parisian ladies is by adoring children and talking medicine—which seems to be another version of the woman’s mission of the last century, “to suckle fools and chronicle small beer.”

“In order to be an accomplished gentleman, it is not sufficient to have studied the art of pleasing in Hippocrates, you must have also learnt the art of loving by means of idolising children. Formerly the education of girls was very limited, boys were brought up in the shade, kept modest and remote from the luxury of the world. Now-a-days, maternity is displayed with an hyperbolical lyricism. The cares it entails and the principles it brings to light constitute a thorough pedantry. Women only talk of their children mercilessly, ostentatiously, and to everybody. The house is subordinated to their lessons, or the system of which they are the object; places, receptions, relations, duties of society—all are sacrificed to them. It is not rare to hear a lady of six-and-thirty say to a friend, ‘I shall not see you all the winter, for you receive on Thursdays, and that is the day for the lesson in history, English, or even anatomy.’ I have known young ladies taught anatomy; how they will talk medicine!”

“Formerly,” our author continues his Jeremiad, “care was taken not to arouse coquetry at too early an age. The mother’s cast-off dresses, the father’s worn-out coats, were razéed for the children; but now they have their fashionable *modistes* and tailors, and nothing is too rich or elegant for them. The consequence is that, by the time boys and girls are fifteen years of age the world has no secrets for them. All the passions of the heart, all the interests of domestic life, are so concentrated on the children in Paris, that the loss of one, even if brothers and sisters remain, has grown into an everlasting sorrow for the family. Fathers, mothers, husbands, before all, are as nothing compared with a child of the age of seven years, or even seven months. After a misfortune of this nature, a mother ignores consolation, pleasure, or duties. She yields to a torpidity which soon serves as an excuse for torpidity of mind. While ad-

hering most strictly to the usages of society, when mourning for a father or mother, a lady who has the misfortune to lose an infant will dress in the deepest black for years. The consequences of this permanent grief lie on the surface: the surviving children feel the want of maternal tenderness, while the husband, who no longer has a wife, is exposed to dangerous temptations." This is certainly a very striking change in French society; we do not ever remember reading before that Parisian dames sinned through an excess of love for their progeny. On the contrary, they have generally been reproached with putting their children out to nurse, for the sake of preserving their own graceful outlines.

According to our author, the mania for spending more than one's income in Paris has led to much domestic discomfort. Although the apartments are furnished most lavishly in the rococo style, and fabulous sums are expended on real or pseudo antiquities, the rooms themselves are mean and paltry. At the present day an ex-minister of state, a gentleman, or a celebrated barrister finds no shame on a fifth floor. The traditional garret of the student and the grisette, dear to poets, has become a fiction; and suites of rooms will be found under the very tiles. In the new quarters of the city, the ground floor is occupied by shops and offices, and the most illustrious persons will live over them. In some of these houses, too, the porter exercises a Draconian severity, and in many instances lodgers are prohibited from possessing cats, flowers, birds, dogs, and even children. It is evident that Paris is still far from possessing English "comfort," a word which, through want of an equivalent, they have been compelled to import into their dictionary.

Another type of the French Empire is that *demi-monde* of which we have heard so much. As M. Wey justly remarks, vice is ostensible enough in London: we have our Cremorne and dancing-rooms, as Paris has its Jardin Mobile and Chateau des Fleurs; but permanent *liaisons*, in which a young man of family wears the chains of a porter's or a cobbler's daughter, are pre-eminently characteristic of the French capital. There, young noblemen degrade themselves publicly on behalf of ignorant mercenary women, who coldly ruin them, and who grow the more renowned the more heartless they prove themselves. At the present day, the *demi-monde*, to the shame of the French, is an acknowledged society; young girls and mothers of families are able to find in it excuses or models; in one word, lost women have their romances, their theatres, their apologists, and their admirers. These creatures give their routs, and the guests are not allowed to put their feet on the chairs—before a certain hour. Writes M. Wey—

"Not knowing exactly what to say to one of them, at whose

house I was introduced, I complimented her on her furniture and household. 'Ah,' she replied, 'but I can tell you it costs a lot. Though I may look after the accounts, they come to four hundred francs a month—then there's the washerwoman, the groom, the coachman, the keep of my horses, and the forty *sous* I allow my mother.'

Everybody knows, if not "the Lady with the Camelias," then the "Traviata;" and our author tells us, for the first time, who that celebrity was. In her spring-time she was a shoebinder, until she was led astray by some students, who christened her "the lark," because she was always singing. In a few months she devoured all the romances of the Quartier Latin; and so great was the stupidity of her fellow-dames, that this education gave her a marked superiority over them, and the legend converted into "Camelias" the shoes she formerly bound.

Another peculiarity with the French of the Second Empire is their marked predilection for titles and bits of ribbon. In Alphonse Karr's last volume, "*En Fumant*," we read that one of the most devoted of deputies implored Louis Philippe, on his knees, to give his son some title, as a splendid marriage depended on it. The king obstinately refused; but as the deputy was going away broken-hearted, the wily monarch said, "My good fellow, I cannot give your son a title, but what the deuce prevents him taking one?" This has spread to such an extent under the Empire, that a law was passed to make the nobility, true and false, prove their title. Referring to this law, Karr very bitterly gives a string of excuses for the apocryphal counts, &c., when compelled to lay aside their titles. One of them will serve as a specimen:—"By Jove, I am in great embarrassment. I can only supply my proofs by establishing the fact that one of my ancestors had his head cut off for robbing the mail, while he would have been hanged had he been a *roturier*; so I would sooner resign my title." On the subject of orders, M. Wey remarks:—

"The Spaniards and Italians, chivalrous and gallant nations, share the French predilection for external signs. In England, no one appears in the street or at private parties with decorations or uniforms. They are reserved for official ceremonies or receptions. 'It is illogical,' an officer said to me, with some show of reason. 'At Windsor, or at a St. James's levee, everybody knows who you are, and the ribbon of the Bath gives you no distinction; while in the streets, at hotels, railway-stations—in short, wherever you are unknown—a bit of ribbon might secure you greater respect.' His idea was just when referring to France, where the lower classes are disposed to insolence, and the numerous small fry of officials are arrogant; but in London no one requires to be protected by the prestige of rank, and we find neither the obsequious grace of French

amiability, nor the rude or impertinent familiarity of French haughtiness. The relations between English citizens, commanded by necessity or duty, are cold and peaceful; people do not trouble themselves about their neighbours, and confine themselves to the interchange of indispensable remarks, without compliments or insults."

Some holders of the Cross of the Legion refrain from wearing it, through political motives. Anglicised, through a posthumous attachment to a Parliamentary Government, they despise, under an imperial regime, an order instituted by the First Consul, and which they received from the House of Bourbon. That is their way of humiliating the present Government. But as, after all, a Frenchman likes to make a show, they are vexed at being compelled to behave in a way which confounds them with the crowd, and they are only the more opposed to a Government which reduces their displeasure to such a disagreeable manifestation. With the Legitimists the question is more simple, for they obtain an Austrian or Catholic decoration. A landowner, who had obtained from the Pope the black ribbon of St. Sepulchre, was once asked by his bailiff why his Cross of the Legion was in mourning. After all, though, says M. Wey—

"The Parisians, whether Viscounts or Marquises, do not the less ride in hackney-coaches: they lodge, without any scruples of etiquette, between two shops; they will occupy a first floor over their grocer or their apothecary; they will offer their guest a dinner sent in from an eating-house, and served by waiters; they will accept, without scruple, the invitation of a tarnished Croesus, if his fare be succulent; in short, they are only infatuated for visible distinctions which give them a personal value. Their love of equality boldly fraternises with the higher classes, and with the lower as well; but in the latter case, they establish their rank by a noble condescension, which they call *être bon Prince*. The duke, of recent promotion, was a true type of his country, who said to an old comrade who called him Highness, 'In private life simply call me Monseigneur.'"

One of the best anecdotes on the subject is fathered, whether rightly or wrongly, on Alexander the great Dumas. When he brought out one of his early tragedies, his patron, the Duc d'Orleans, was so pleased with it that he resolved to give the author a gold snuff-box, with his portrait set in diamonds. Seeing Dumas at Chantilly races, the duke sent an aide-de-camp to inform him of his intention. After congratulating the poet warmly, the officer asked him where he should leave the box for him. "Well," said the Bohemian, "since you are so obliging, would you mind pawning it as you go along, and leave the money for me at my lodgings?"

We will now turn our attention to another author, who is able

to tell us a good deal about Parisian society. The Baron de Mortemar Boisse has produced a species of French "Hints to Etiquette,"* very far superior to anything in this country. In fact, it is a book which ought to be read with kid gloves. According to this writer the "world of Paris generally is subdivided into a number of minor worlds. Thus we have:—

"The court world, in which strict etiquette, self-esteem, and ambition, absorb all the other faculties, and in which husbands pay very dearly for the toilette and success of their wives.

"The diplomatic world, elegant, amiable, well-bred, and discreet.

"The sporting world, one of those serious institutions imported from across Channel.

"The scientific world, which grows pale over books, and perishes from want.

"The agricultural world, which would like to supply us, if it could, with the bread we want.

"The horticultural world, which strives to give a tulip a hyacinth scent, and the hyacinth a violet odour.

"The world of the Stock Exchange, where people grow rich by employing the money of others.

"The whist world, inhabited by persons who are of no service in the ball-room.

"The theatrical world, which no one enters unless he has orders from manager.

"The shooting world, in which people kill what they can—sometimes a friend or themselves.

"The dancing world, which is daily diminishing, and will soon be expressed by bows.

"The military world, in which glory may be certainly acquired, but money rarely.

"The world of the fencing-room, where people learn the use of the sword, to defend themselves from insult, and sometimes to provoke it."

But the world of worlds, according to our Baron, is the "elegant and witty world of good society," which traditionally exists in the Faubourg St. Germain, as well as in portions of the Chaussée d'Antin, remote from the Rue Breda. On the other hand, M. Wey is especially severe on this world, which he qualifies with the title of the "Seven Sleepers." It is only in such a circle that a lady could keep under a glass case the pen with which Mons. Dupanloup wrote Louis Napoleon down a Pontius Pilate, and the ancient aristocracy of France may fairly be compared with the Jacobites of the reign of William III., who, in their impotence to produce a revolution, fell into a contemptible lethargy, in which they slowly, but

* "*La Vie Elegante a Paris*," par le Baron de Mortemar Boisse. Paris: L. Hachette & Co.

surely expired. At the present day, these Osmanlis of the West possess but little influence, and confine themselves to malicious jests upon the Imperial Government, and a display of impertinence toward the Parvenus. They have a special test of noble breeding in the manner in which persons pronounce the names of noble families which belong to the olden times, thus :—

“It is annoying not to know, when you come into contact with the society of olden times, that the name of the Duc d'Escars is pronounced *d'Ecars*, and written, at the present day, *des Cars*; that Fenelon is pronounced *Fenlon*; Coigny, *Cogny*; Talleyrand, *Tallrand*; Duras, d'Uzes, *Dura, d'Uze*; Saint Priest, *Saint Pri*; Castries, *Castres*; de Croy, *de Cروي*; Crâon, *Cran*; Sully, *Suilly*, shewing the *l*; Coetlogon, *Cotlogon*; Bearn, *Bear*; Soyecourt, *Socourt*; Chastellux, *Chatelu*; Bezenval, *Bezval*,” &c.

While admiring the great changes which Louis Napoleon has made in his capital, we must not omit to look at the reverse of the medal, and in that case we shall probably find that the Parisians have lost in comfort what they have gained in splendour. We may fairly assume that everything is double its former price in Paris. The worst off are people with an income of from fifteen to eighteen hundred pounds a-year. They were rich before the Revolution which has taken place in French manners, and did not forget to overshadow with their wealth a number of small people, who lived from hand to mouth, by employing their talent. At the present time, however, they have just sufficient to live in retirement, and keep the wolf from the door. The extravagant balls and dinners of which we read in fashionable papers, are not given by the French, but by the Russians, Brazilians, and Americans, who have rendered Paris, during the Empire, a cosmopolitan capital. As Mané, the clever correspondent of the *Indépendance Belge*, writes :—

“The influence of this concourse of foreigners within our walls extends over everything that constitutes Parisian life. They are the persons who adore the idols of our demi-monde, and for them such lovely complexions are prepared with pearl powder, and skins so beautifully veined with blue lines, the work of the pencil. It is for them that nails and lips are reddened, and the eyelids blackened. They have upset a celebrated dictum, ‘all for the people, and by the people;’ and the motto of these syrens is ‘all for the foreigners and by the foreigners.’ They ought to be seen on a spring Sunday in the Bois de Boulogne. What elegance! What flounces! What precious ornaments and appointments, and what carriages! That well-known team of four horses is the tribute of Hungary: certain lace I could mention was furnished by Russia. Wallachia supplied the bracelets, and England the diamond ear-rings. The household of a well-established Aspasia is a sort of geographical map which refutes all the notions taught by Maltebrun; seated in

an easy chair, you are in Poland; and if you cross to the adjoining couch, you are in Portugal."

M. Wey, who is to a certain extent a *laudator temporis acti*, declares that the downfall of the French nation is vanity. Pride has demoralised everything, even to the very language; clerks have become employés; cashiers, accountants; wine merchants, oenophilic societies; customers, clients; perruquiers, hair-dressers; hair-dressers, capillary artistes; tradesmen, merchants; manufacturers, industrials; cobblers, bootmakers; apothecaries, chemists, who have laboratories; grammarians, philologists; shops, magazines or *salons*; colonial produce has taken the place of grocery; second-hand wares are called curiosities; while a dealer in second-hand furniture, writes up "artistic objects" over his shop, which he calls a cabinet. We do not think, however, that this is a fault of the country so much as of the age we live in. Equally absurd metamorphoses may be noticed during a stroll through Regent Street. Still, it appears that this vanity has existed for a long time in Paris, as will be seen from the following anecdote, still quoting from M. Wey—

"When I was a young man (says a centagenarian speaker), in 1786, we used to wear powdered perukes with queues, which dirtied the backs of our coats, especially when they were shaken by the movement of the carriage; an inconvenience which the real ladies and gentlemen avoided by being carried to a ball in a sedan chair. Those persons who were not supposed to be rich, and arrived with a clean coat, were suspected of having come on foot; hence, whenever they were reduced to this necessity, they carefully made the barber powder the back of their coats before leaving their house, so as to make people believe that they had come in a carriage."

We fully go along with M. Wey, when he complains of the deterioration of eatables and beverages in Paris. Although the Baron de Mortemar Boisse gives the most elaborate instructions as to how the dinner should be served up, the arrangement of dishes, and other matters in which G. H. M., the umquhile correspondent of the *Times*, on matters culinary would revel, this is essentially a case to which the "first catch your hare" is applicable. We can say from experience that, at the present day, a better and cheaper dinner can be obtained in London than in Paris, by those who know where to seek. Of course, we leave such establishments as the Café Anglais, which is unapproachable, out of the question; but the pleasant dinners of our youth in the Palais Royale are no longer to be met with. But, on this most important subject, we will let M. Wey speak for himself:—

"At Paris, the profusion of adulterated articles, and the pompous disguisements of everything that is worth nothing, have

perverted the sense of taste. The cuisine of the restaurateurs is at once nauseous and strong; the art of roasting is a mystery to them, and the worst of all known dishes is their roast game. Private persons, as a rule, feed poorly; because their housekeepers, by simplifying the art of cookery through motives of economy, have untaught the majority of cooks. We must remark that, in many houses where the husband gives the wife an allowance for house-keeping, she effects a saving on behalf of her dress. But the worst cooking will be found at official tables, with but few exceptions; there you find badly disguised dishes, sauces without character, which only smell of salt and grease; and preparations of isinglass, which are a derisive parody on succulent jellies. As a general rule the Parisians have no idea of what is good, and it is a pleasure to dupe them. You may serve them with impunity, the same wine under six different labels; and they devour everything that is renowned, or is supposed to have come a long distance. They have approved Amiens *patés*, which are greasy and heavy, and Chartres *patés*, which have no flavour—because they are made of partridges—a dry short meat. They also accept *foie gras*, which would disgrace the next porkshop, and compare it with that which comes from Strasbourg and Periuguex. The Parisian pastry-cooks, who know not how to season meats, or lighten them with broth, produce indigestible and insipid *patés*. Nearly all the bad truffles are consumed in Paris. Turtle soup is made of calves' heads, and pullet's combs of ox-tongues. In Paris, if you are invited to a grand dinner for thirty days running, you will find the same courses everywhere, apparently very brilliant, but you leave the table hungry. If you were allowed to eat, you would be taken ill. In eastern France, you may eat too much, and no harm is done; but you would grow to an enormous size if you did not take to flight. A man who in Paris ventured to offer his friends a dinner which, despising etiquette, sharpened the appetite, must be either very modest, or excessively daring. In former times, so I have heard, even at grand dinner parties, guests loudly applauded dishes, and sang their praise; now-a-days, people are not expected to know what they are eating, and it is customary never to speak about it. I can quite believe it."

We had marked several more passages for extract, but such heterodoxy on the part of a Frenchman has fairly unnerved us. Still, we think, that we have carried out the intention with which we commenced this paper—of showing our readers that all that glitters is not gold, even in the fairy-like capital of Imperial France. The personal result of our inquiry into the présent social condition of our allies is, that we are prepared to endure a sixpenny income-tax without repining, and thank the gods that we have no "Prefect of the Thames" to double it, through a desire to convert London into a city of palaces at the cost of the nation.

DEATH AT THE ALTAR

"At last," I said, joyfully, as I descended the steps of a West-end mansion, and entered my brougham; "at last my day's work is finished, and I may hope at least for a few hours' repose. "Home," I said to the coachman, and throwing myself back in the seat, gave way to my thoughts. I had acquired, during a practice extending over nearly thirty years, a habit of passing in review, at the close of my day's labours, all the patients I had seen and prescribed for. To this habit I attribute, in a great measure, the successful treatment of many of my most difficult cases; for frequently, while thus reconsidering the case, away from the sick room, the nervous worrying of the patient, and the well-meant but injudicious comments of friends, an entirely new diagnosis would present itself, and ultimately prove the correct one. My visiting-list that day was a heavy one, and I had reconsidered the symptoms, and determined on the treatment of half my patients, before I arrived at my own house in Cavendish Square. Alas! my dreams of repose were futile, for, as soon as I entered, the servant handed me two notes. One was from a Mrs. Mansfield, the wife of a rich City merchant, with a mansion in Eaton Square, and ran as follows:—

"DEAR DOCTOR —,

"Pray come round at once; Clara has had another of those distressing nervous attacks—if anything, worse than the previous ones. Use all your skill, for at the present juncture it is most awkward.

"Yours very truly,

"EMMA MANSFIELD."

"Awkward, indeed!" I muttered, not over-pleased. "And is that the term used by a mother in speaking of a daughter's health? O Mammon, thou art, in truth, omnipotent! Here is this mercenary old woman speaking of her daughter's bad health as 'awkward,' and why? Because the said daughter has attracted the favourable regards of a man old enough to be her father—a lump of gout and servile imbecility. What matter! is he not a baronet? Sir Richard Burley, of Burley Hall, Berks, with fifteen thousand a-year—a park, a town-house, and family jewels, of course; and of course, also, poor little Clara Mansfield's 'nervous attacks' (as her mamma designated violent hysterics, followed by deadly syncope), are very 'awkward,' *when* the baronet is expected to make an offer every day." Telling the coachman to wait, I entered the house, and while waiting for a glass of sherry and a

biscuit (dinner was out of the question), I opened the other note; it ran thus:—

“DEAR DOCTOR,

“Please give me a look round at once. That confounded RUSSIAN BULLET in my body gives me a good deal of pain to-day. Besides, I wish to see you particularly on another subject, which almost drives me mad.

“Yours very sincerely,

“GEORGE SELBY.”

“Confound the fellow!” I muttered; “been out to a bachelor’s party, I suppose—had too much punch, and, as a consequence, the ‘Russian bullet,’ as he calls it, in his body, sets up a mild inflammation, by way of a reminder of its presence. I’ve a great mind not to go; these young fellows seem to think we doctors have nothing to do but get them round when their own folly has caused a relapse. Something else he wants to see me about, too, that ‘almost drives him mad;’—lost his money at cards, last night; or heard this morning that the horse he backed for the Derby is scratched, perhaps. It is some such folly, I’ll be bound. I’ve a great mind not to go!”

Nevertheless, however great my mind *not* to go might have been, in less than five minutes I was being whirled down to Selby’s chambers, in Clarges Street, Piccadilly. Now, in spite of my ill-humour (and who would not be a little annoyed at having their hopes of dinner and repose so rudely dashed aside, after a hard day’s work), I felt considerably uneasy at young Selby’s brief note. First, in a purely professional point of view, I did not like the return of the pain from the bullet; secondly, in a more human, friendly point of view, I was concerned to know what had occurred to make my young friend write in such strong terms. He was not usually demonstrative—but now he wrote of something which “almost drove him mad.”

I may as well take this opportunity of saying a few words in explanation.

George Selby had been a patient of mine for the last nine months, and, under Providence, owed his life to my unremitting care. He was a Lieutenant in the —th Foot, and first on the list for his company. On the glorious but bloody day of Inkermann he was stricken down, while leading his company on (the Captain had previously fallen). He was carried, desperately wounded, from the corpse-strewn plain—alive, but leaving his left arm behind him, and carrying off, in lieu of it, a brace of bullets in his body. One was successfully extracted, and, in due course, the wound healed.

The stump of his left arm, too, progressed favourably, and, but

for the empty sleeve, was as sound as before. But the second bullet puzzled the whole staff of surgeons, army and civilian. They knew it was in, but not all their skill could get it out. In vain they probed, in vain they speculated as to its whereabouts. Wherever it was, it seemed determined to remain; so, after putting the poor wounded soldier to the torture several times in each day during a weary month, they gave it up in despair—allowed the wound in the chest to heal, and sent the incorrigible Russian projectile home in the invalided body of poor George Selby. One surgeon, loath to give up the search, boldly proposed to the patient that he should submit to a “little operation.” When interrogated by the wounded Lieutenant as to its nature, this practitioner coolly informed him that the “little operation” merely consisted in cutting down through the dorsal muscles, &c., to the supposed site of the ball, instead of attempting to find it by the wound——

“But suppose it’s not where you expect to find it?” asked the patient.

Then, my dear sir,” replied the imperturbable son of the knife, “*we shall have had our trouble for nothing.*”

“And the operation?”

“Oh! it’s not very dangerous, and if we don’t find the ball we’ll strap you up, and the wound will heal in no time. A clean operation wound is a very different thing from these crushing, tearing bullets.”

“Pretty cool that, Doctor, wasn’t it?” said Selby, laughing, when he related the anecdote to me; “after I’d been suffering the torments of the damned under their hands for a month, to want to cut down through my back on the chance of finding the bullet somewhere.”

However, to return. When first young Selby placed himself under my hands, he was in the last stage of emaciation and weakness from hectic fever. The pain from the ball was still constant and distressing; and it was at once evident to me that, unless something decided were done at once, there would be a vacancy in her Majesty’s —th Foot in less than a month.

All my professional brethren whom he had consulted had strictly enjoined a lowering diet, with total abstinence from stimulants, and anything which could in the least degree tend to irritate and inflame the seat of mischief. Now, although I could not condemn this mode of treatment under the circumstances, yet I saw plainly that a change was the only chance of saving the patient’s life. Fearful of inflammation, which was always threatening, sometimes imminent, they had adopted the most stringent antiphlogistic measures, and had thereby weakened the system and lowered the vital powers to that degree, that to lower them further would be to lower the patient out of existence. Such being the state of affairs, I ordered

him to the sea-side, told him to take nourishing food and a pint of port wine daily, until the inflammation and pain very decidedly appeared. Then I gave him directions how to subdue it, principally by local means, for I foresaw clearly that the system would bear no more tampering with. He followed my advice with much wonder, and some little misgiving. However, the case turned out exactly as I had expected; the wine and good living *did* bring on a return of the inflammatory symptoms. These, however, were subdued by local applications, leeching, stopping the wine, and lowering the diet again for a day or so, while the general health was so much improved as to enable him, successfully, to resist and tide over the danger. After the first fortnight, he had no return of the pain, or any of the bad symptoms, and I congratulated myself on having effected a perfect cure. Selby returned to town, and, seeing much of him, I got to like him amazingly. His large, frank nature, had in it something so fresh; his gratitude to myself was, though unostentatious, so genuine, that I, old, hard man of the world, as a long London practice had made me, felt deeply interested in the young Lieutenant. His fortitude and good temper, even when his frame was at the weakest, and his sufferings were at the highest point, were such, as in a long experience, I had seldom seen equalled—never exceeded. He came to see me frequently, and made of me a confidant in all his troubles, mental as well as physical. Thus it happened that I knew all about himself and his prospects. The latter were tolerable, for, although he had in *præsenti* only about a hundred and thirty pounds a-year above his pay, he had in *futuro* a certainty of a moderate estate of something like fifteen hundred a-year, after the death of an old uncle of sixty.

Arriving in Clarges Street, I was shown into his apartments, where I found him impatiently pacing up and down the room. His face was flushed, while I could see at once by the sudden, quick twitch that ever and anon came over his features, that his old enemy, the “Russian,” as he called the bullet, was making itself felt.

“Why, George, my boy,” I said, “what’s the matter? You look hot and feverish. Let me feel your pulse?” I took his hand. “Ninety-five, as I live,” I cried, “and with a twang like a harp-string! Why, what on earth have you been doing with yourself? You were perfectly well when I saw you yesterday.”

“Doing with myself?” he replied, “upon my word, Doctor, I hardly know. It’s not the bullet that troubles me, though Heaven knows that’s bad enough.”

Here his features again twitched convulsively, and he turned deadly pale as the pain shot through him. True to himself, however, he never uttered a word on the subject, and when it had somewhat passed off, continued—

"Sit down, Doctor, and I'll tell you all about it."

He filled himself a glass of wine, and was about to commence, when I stopped him.

"You are drinking wine I see! How much have you taken to-day?" I asked.

"That's the second bottle since four o'clock," he said coolly, pointing to a decanter, in which there was about a teaspoonful left.

"Well, upon my word, this is very nice conduct! Here, you send for me, and I find you in a burning fever, with all the old bad symptoms returning, and you drink wine before my face, and coolly tell me you've finished two bottles in less than three hours. Why, sir, you're mad! I'll have you locked up in an asylum on my own responsibility. Here have I made a wonderful, almost miraculous cure; and no sooner does my patient get round, than he must show his gratitude by drinking himself into a fever! It's too bad; I wash my hands of the case, and if you have a desire to oblige me, place yourself again under the care of your old medical advisers, and die in their hands."

"Come, Doctor," he said, "don't be ill-tempered. I care little for the bodily pain; but if you knew what I suffer in mind, you would make some allowance for me."

"Well, well," I said, looking at my watch; "make haste and say what you have to say, as I have another patient to visit, and have not yet dined."

"Yes, I know," he said, bitterly; "you are going to see Clara Mansfield; her mother has sent for you;" then, seeing my look of surprise, he added, "You wonder how I knew it—quite a *clairvoyant* you think me, do you not? But it is easily explained, for I was there when the young lady was attacked, and it was on my arm she fell when she fainted."

My astonishment was great at this, for although I knew George Selby to be acquainted with the Mansfields, having myself introduced him, I was not aware that he was on such terms of intimacy as to be an afternoon visitor. If I was surprised at this fact, I was infinitely more so as he went on speaking. He spoke rapidly and passionately, and several times, ere he concluded, rose and walked impatiently up and down the room.

It was now some months since I had introduced him to the Mansfield family. Mrs. Mansfield, whose whole heart was set on forcing her way into good society, had asked me, as a particular favour, to introduce to her as many gentlemen of good position and family as possible. Mr. Mansfield had but lately retired from business, and migrated from his house at Clapham to the Eaton Square mansion; consequently their circle of West-end acquaintance was extremely limited; nor could Mrs. Mansfield, with all her

worldly wisdom and manœuvring, backed by the money-bags of her husband, succeed in increasing it as she could have wished. A great dinner party was determined on; but although the viands and cookery might be of the best, and the wines of the costliest vintages, the dinner would be given in vain if there were no one to eat it.

It was under these circumstances that I introduced my friend, Lieutenant Selby. In answer to their inquiries, I was enabled to inform them that he was well born, well connected, with good prospects, and moving in good circles. With this they were fully satisfied, and George Selby, with his interesting pale face and empty sleeve, was made quite a lion of. With the two young ladies he became an especial favourite, and I soon fancied that Clara, the younger, was far from indifferent to his merits, mental and personal, which were not small, spite of his one arm. As for the young fellow himself, I never could quite make him out. He would talk, laugh, and flirt to their heart's content; with the full approval, be it observed, of the worthy mamma, who, doubtless, at that time, considered him a decidedly eligible *parti*—at all events, too good an acquaintance to be discouraged. It seemed to me, however, that, notwithstanding the undisguised preference of my pretty Clara for him, that he divided his attentions pretty equally between the two sisters; I was, therefore, the more surprised when he informed me this day, that although he had never declared his love, he and the young lady perfectly understood each other after less than a month's acquaintance. Soon, however, the Mansfields, by dint of pushing and elbowing their way, managed to get the thin end of the wedge into society; one introduction led to another: occasionally the merchant could boast of a live lord at his mahogany, and more than one baronet's card might have been found in the card-plate.

In proportion as Mrs. Mansfield increased and extended her acquaintance, her self-esteem rose, and she began to regard George Selby as scarcely up to their standard. It was at this juncture that a little misunderstanding arose between himself and Clara—jealousy on her part and pride on his—for he was proud as Lucifer, and would laugh at them to their faces about their wealth and his own poverty. From what he himself told me, and from what happened afterwards, I know that Clara Mansfield really loved him—alas, for herself! deeply—permanently. I had known Clara from a child, and could, therefore, vouch for her affectionate, amiable disposition, but I also knew that she was passionate, and at times hasty. Although George Selby was at no time formally her suitor, accepted or otherwise, her woman's heart told her that he loved her, and it required no conjuror to discover the state of her feelings

towards him, for she was impulsive and candid, almost to an extreme. This being the case, she assumed the privileges and power she should have possessed had they been formally engaged. Sooth to say, George bore this very well, for the yoke was a very light one, and the whip, when wielded by the charming Clara, was rather a delicate compliment than a chastisement or restraint. One unlucky day, however, Clara gave his pride a blow from which it never recovered. The very excess of her love for him made her almost morbidly jealous; and on this occasion she thought he had been paying too great attention to some other fair damsel. Selby kept his temper admirably, rather pleased than otherwise at this evidence of the deep love she bore him. Not so Clara. Provoked beyond endurance by the playful manner in which he parried her reproaches, she proceeded a step further; and though in her heart she knew he was as true as steel, even questioned his motives in paying his attentions to her. Not noticing, or not heeding, the growing paleness of his face, and the gathering cloud on his brow, she went on wounding his proud spirit more deeply every moment, till at last the bitter, unpardonable words were said—yes—she, Clara Mansfield, who knew he was the soul of honour, asserted that he cared not one bit for herself, but that it was her fortune that attracted him. She said the words, and knew at the same time that they were false as he was true. She spoke them deliberately, and her heart smote her instantly for her injustice. She stamped her little foot as she finished, and waited impatiently for an answer, hoping that he would be in a passion, and indignantly disclaim any such motives. Then she would say she was sorry, and would make it up again, and they would be better friends than ever.

Thus thought poor Clara. Alas! for human forethought—*L'homme propose, mais Dieu dispose*—Lieutenant George Selby, of Her Majesty's —th Foot did nothing of the sort. He was silent for a long time, remaining standing before her with downcast eyes and pale face. She began to be frightened. At last he raised his head, and bowing coldly, said quietly, "Miss Clara Mansfield, I have the honour to wish you a very good morning."

Then he turned and left, and Clara was alone with her misery.

Selby saw her no more, for he carefully avoided the house, until this day, when meeting Mr. Mansfield, who had none of his wife's high notions, he had been dragged in, almost against his will. He declared he would not have gone had not the old gentleman said the young ladies were out. This proved, however, not to be the case; for Clara was at home, and in spite of all he could do to prevent it, they were left alone together in the room. There was an embarrassing silence: then she burst into tears, and throwing herself at his feet, begged forgiveness for her words.

"What could I do?" he said to me. "I could only tell her I had nothing to forgive, and try to console her."

"Of course you could not do otherwise. But now, my boy, it seems to me that the quarrel is made up. What is it that annoys you? Can you be so ungenerous as to bear malice still?"

"Wait a minute," he continued, bitterly; "you have not heard all. It appears that this very morning—urged on, influenced, and, I fancy, intimidated by that heartless old mother of hers—she has actually accepted Sir Richard Burley!"

"She told me," he continued, after a pause, "that she had written to me twice, and looked and longed in vain for an answer. The old story, I suppose—scheming mother, in the interest of rich suitor, intercepts letters to poor one. All this she told me, and more. She said she hated, loathed this man whom she had accepted, and that she loved me. Then Mrs. Mansfield came into the room, and a scene ensued. She reproached Clara with falsehood, ingratitude, indelicacy, and I know not what; me she accused of being dishonourable, abusing the rights of hospitality, and finally concluded by expressing her belief that it was her daughter's fortune which I sought. At this last accusation, Clara fired up, and defended me against her mother, until, unable any longer to endure the torrent of reproaches hurled at her, she fell fainting on my arm. Then all was hurry-scurry and confusion; and while she was yet insensible, the accepted lover drove up in his carriage. I heard the servant despatched for you, and as soon as my poor girl began to show signs of returning life, I left the house. I met Sir Richard on the stairs, and if ever I felt inclined to pitch a man over the banisters it was then. And now, Doctor, you know all. I shall, of course, never return to the house again, and poor little Clara will be Lady Burley, of Burley Park, &c."

"Come, come," I said, "*Nil desperandum!* Let us hope for the best. I will see what can be done; meanwhile, you take this composing draught, and go to bed. I will come to you early to-morrow."

He sent out the prescription for the draught, but declared he would not, could not, lie down; so I left him pacing impatiently up and down the room, and drove to Eaton Square.

I was shown into the drawing-room, and was quickly joined by Mrs. Mansfield.

"So very unfortunate for poor, dear Clara," she said, sailing up to me, and taking my hand in her vulgarly-artificial manner; "so peculiarly, unfortunate, Doctor, at present. I suppose you know that she is engaged to be married to Sir Richard Burley? Such an excellent match! Dear Clara has the highest respect and regard

for him, and he, dear man, is most impatient for the ceremony to come off. Indeed, papa and I have just been talking it over with Sir Richard, who is still with Mr. Mansfield, and who talks of a fortnight; but we both thought that nothing less than a month would be proper and decorous. Do you not agree with me, Doctor?"

"Madam," I said, gravely, "my time is valuable; I was not aware that you sent for me to discuss the details of your daughter's marriage. I gathered from your note that she was ill, and hurried here, as, from what I know of her constitution, I greatly mistrust and fear these fainting-fits."

I could scarcely keep my temper during the next five minutes, in which Mrs. Mansfield insisted on treating me with the whole history of the arrangements—the liberal settlements promised by Sir Richard, the family jewels, and all the other primary points in the eyes of the sons and daughters of mammon.

"Will you allow me to see my patient, Mrs. Mansfield?" I said at last, resolutely, "or I must wish you good evening!"

"O, certainly—certainly! Doctor," she said, with some asperity, for she could not fail to notice the air of displeasure with which I listened to her worldly cackling.

I was shown into a small room up-stairs, which the sisters called their own. I found my poor little pet, Clara, with her face buried in the pillows of the sofa, and sobbing as if her heart would break. I had little difficulty in eliciting everything from her. I had attended her from her childhood upwards, and had been her confidant and adviser in many a childish sorrow. Now she was only too glad in being able to tell some one her misery and repentance.

"And do you really mean to marry this Sir Richard Burley?" I asked, when she had concluded.

"How can I help it, Doctor? He asked me before mamma this morning, and mamma looked at me so, and then I was angry because—because—I had written twice to some one and had no answer; and then mamma half answered for me, and she took my hand, and put it in his, saying, 'God bless you, Clara, and may you be happy.' What could I do? What can I do? See! what he has sent me," she added, starting up, and taking a morocco case from the table, she drew forth an emerald bracelet which must have cost some hundreds. "See!" she said, holding it up to me, "is it not pretty? but I hate it, I hate him, and I hate myself,"—and flinging the glistening jewellery aside, she again buried her head in the sofa-cushions, and wept.

"What shall I do, Doctor?" she said distractedly, after some little time, which I employed in feeling her pulse, and writing a prescription; "pray advise me, or I shall go mad."

"The only advice I can offer you, my dear Clara, is to wait. They cannot force you to marry this man against your will."

"But they will," she continued; I cannot help it—mamma never leaves me in peace, but is continually dinning into my ears how proud and grateful I ought to be to Sir Richard. I know they will make me marry him, if I remain here. Oh! why does not George come and take me away, if he really loves me?"

I started at these words. "Surely," I thought to myself, "an elopement, though objectionable as a rule, would be better than this hideous sacrifice."

But the reader may ask, Was not Clara bound in honour to marry Sir Richard Burley, having accepted him? No! emphatically no. Is it right or just, because a girl has in a moment of weakness been untrue to herself, that she should take a false oath to the same effect at the altar of God, and dedicate her whole life to the lie. Assuredly not—at least, so said my humble judgment. Full of the thoughts with which Clara's last words had filled me, I took my leave of her, telling her to keep her heart up, and promising to interest myself in her favour, and call again on the ensuing day.

It was now so long past my dinner-hour that I resolved to forego the meal altogether, and to take a chop with my tea. I ordered the coachman to put me down in Clarges Street, and then sent him on home. I found George Selby much as I left him, stormy, cynical, and savage with himself and the world. It was in vain I tried to console him, and hinted that if he took the race in his own hands the game was his own.

"What! be accused by these vulgar cits of running away with their daughter for her ten thousand pounds!" exclaimed George, indignantly. "No, a hundred times no! If the baronet likes to soil his hands with their money-bags he may; but, as an officer and a gentleman, I wash my hands of the whole business."

"What, even poor Clara?" I asked.

George was silent; and when I went on to describe the poor child's (she was barely eighteen) grief and despair, tears stood in his eyes and he stopped me, saying:—

"There, don't say any more, Doctor! I'd rather go through the last hour at Inkermann, with ten thousand Russian rifles, and a dozen batteries sending their whistling messengers of death into our thin line, than hear you talk of that poor girl. By Jove, I thought I was a man, but you will make a child of me if you go on like this."

I could do no more, so I left him and returned home, to solitude and my books.

The next day I saw my fair patient, Clara Mansfield. She was

still in the same low, despondent state, and seemed incapable of making any exertion. Her wealthy old lover had been showering in presents, which, while she loathed, she had not sufficient energy to refuse. It really seemed as if, in legal phraseology, she would "let judgment go by default." Although she had had no more fainting-fits, she informed me she had several times been very near one. From various symptoms, I was almost inclined to fear disease of the heart, but my utmost skill could not detect anything wrong by auscultation. That it was not altogether fancy and worry of mind, I felt convinced. Sometimes, in conversation, her face would suddenly flush and then instantaneously assume a deadly pallor, and this almost without her knowledge, for she would declare at these times that she felt no particular inconvenience. She seemed to resign herself, helplessly and entirely, to her mother's guidance, and appeared to be floating down the stream to her fate, whatever it might be, without a struggle.

"It is useless, Doctor," she would say, sadly, while her soft blue eyes filled with tears; "it is my destiny, I suppose, to be Lady Burley. *He* could save me, and *he* only; but I insulted him, and he is too proud to forgive."

And so she seemed to resign herself to her fate.

The quiet way in which she accepted what she considered an inevitable evil, was the more incomprehensible to me, from what I knew of her disposition and character. She was wont to be, if anything, rather too headstrong and passionate; now, no lamb could be led more quietly to the slaughter than was Clara Mansfield to her marriage with the Baronet.

During the following week I saw her day by day. Still the same gentle melancholy; still the same uncomplaining submission. I observed that on first entering the room she looked up anxiously, almost hopefully, in my face. I well knew what that look meant. It said, as plainly as words could speak, "Have you no news from *him*? Will he not save me from my fate?" Alas! I had not seen him. He had disappeared without leaving even a note behind him.

It wanted but a fortnight to the appointed day for the marriage of Sir Richard Burley, Bart., of Burley Hall, &c., with Clara Mansfield, when my young friend, Selby, again appeared. He called on me in the evening, about half-past eight o'clock. Haggard, pale, and thin, he seemed fast relapsing into the state from which I had rescued him. When I attempted to feel his pulse, he withdrew his hand almost rudely: neither would he answer any question about his health.

"Never mind my body, Doctor; pain I have plenty, Heaven knows, but it is not that that troubles me now." Then after a

silence, during which he leant his head upon his hands, concealing his face from my view, he said—

“Clara Mansfield will have ten thousand pounds in her own right—will she not?”

“I have reason to believe so,” I said, surprised at the question.

“And if I married her without settlement, it would be mine—would it not?”

“Assuredly,” I said, in still greater astonishment. Could I have been mistaken? Was George Selby really mercenary? It certainly seemed like it.

“Do you think there is any chance of her being happy with this man?” he asked.

“I should be sorry to say there was no chance,” I replied; “but I must confess that I see very little. Setting aside his age and all other objections, I fear he is not calculated to make a kind or loving husband. They say he ill-used his first wife dreadfully—even struck her; and he has far, very far from a good character.”

“Then I’ll do it,” he exclaimed, starting to his feet; “she shan’t be sacrificed to the old ruffian.”

“Do what?”

“Carry her off to-morrow, if she’ll come. Do you think she will?”

Now, although I was quite certain that she would go to the end of the world with but the faintest encouragement from him, I could not quite say so.

“I think it’s very likely,” I replied; “really you must know her better than I do.”

“Do you think she would put up with moderate means; soldier’s fare and that sort of thing for a year or two.”

“I am sure she would, gladly. But you have no necessity to inflict poverty on her; with your income, your pay, and the interest of her fortune, you will have some seven hundred a-year; surely you can exist on that without quite being obliged to live in a cottage.”

“Her fortune! Don’t speak of it. As soon as it comes into my possession (with her previous consent, of course) I mean to take it round to Eaton Square in a cab—all in gold—and fling the money-bags into the hall. Then they would see whether I married my darling Clara for her fortune. An original idea— isn’t it, Doctor?” and he laughed with something of his old spirits.

“Original, certainly,” I replied. “I can’t very much see the prudence of it, however.”

“And now I’m off to reconnoitre,” he said, shaking my hand. “Bribing ladies’ maids, inventing disguises, and all the sort of thing you see in farces and comedies. ‘None but the brave deserve the fair.’ Adieu, Doctor.”

"The young scamp will win yet, I do believe," I muttered as he left me, "in spite of his poverty and one arm"—

L'homme propose, mais Dieu dispose. I was picturing to myself the rage and chagrin of Mansfield *mère*, when she should discover the elopement of Clara with the one-armed Lieutenant, and chuckling to myself on the probability of the young people being made happy, when a double knock and a violent ring came to the door, and in stalked George Selby as pale and ghastly-looking as a corpse.

"Good heavens! what is the matter with you? Has the pain come on again severely? Let me mix you a cordial." I was proceeding to do so when he motioned me to desist, and said—

"It's all over, Doctor. They're gone."

"Gone."

"Yes, gone on the Continent for a fortnight's trip, and won't be back till the day before the wedding. That hoary old scoundrel has gone with them. I've a great mind to follow them and put a bullet through his head," he said savagely.

I saw it all now. Mrs. Mansfield had set her heart on the match; and fearing, false mother as she was, Clara's love for George, she had feared they might meet and be reconciled. In that case she knew full well, notwithstanding Clara's gentleness and docility, that no rock would be firmer. Clara seldom said "no," but when she she meant it.

And so they took the poor girl with the breaking heart to Paris, and only brought her back the night before the wedding. Determined to leave no stone unturned, I called on the evening of their return to town. I was unable to see Clara alone, but she gave me a look which I shall never forget. A look of earnest inquiry. A look which said plainly, "It is not yet too late; have you come from him?" Alas! he had again disappeared as before. Could I have found him that evening all might have been well. I could not, would not have allowed the poor girl thus to doom herself to misery. At the risk of my professional reputation, I myself would have enacted the part of the stage Abigail, and been the medium of communication. But it was not to be so. Poor Clara saw no hope in my face. Her look of eager inquiry changed to one of reproach, and at last faded into such an expression of hopeless despair that I could scarcely command my voice as I asked the few ordinary professional questions necessary.

My former suspicions received confirmation, and when I left I requested to speak to Mrs. Mansfield alone.

"Madam, I hear your daughter is to be married to-morrow. Allow me strongly to counsel, at least, the postponement of the ceremony."

"Impossible, Doctor," she said; "all the arrangements have been made, the deeds signed—everything is ready. Besides, dear Clara seems rather better to-day than usual."

"I regret to say that I have to-day observed unfavourable symptoms. I fear—I am almost certain that there is organic disease. Not, I believe, incurable; or, even with ordinary care, dangerous; but still I should most strongly counsel a postponement—its excitement might be fatal. In this case there is especial danger, too. I have reason to believe that your daughter is exceedingly averse to the marriage——"

Mrs. Mansfield coloured with shame and anger.

"Averse to the marriage!—ridiculous!" she said. "I am sure our dear girl feels the highest respect and admiration for Sir Richard."

Respect and admiration for that *bad*, bloated old man! What a mockery!

"I have done my duty, Mrs. Mansfield; I have told you that to marry your daughter to-morrow is injudicious, and even dangerous. If you choose to act against my deliberate advice, I have no power to prevent your so acting. On your head be the consequences of your conduct."

I could see that the worldly woman was somewhat staggered by these words. However, mammon prevailed, and, as far as she was concerned, I felt certain that the marriage would take place as originally fixed.

The morning arrived—the morning of that day which was to make Clara Mansfield Lady Burley. Notwithstanding my loathing and hatred of the mockery about to be enacted, I resolved to attend, not from any consideration for the vain worldly mother, but to be at hand in case of the sudden illness of my meek patient. As I walked slowly down Regent Street, intending to turn into Hanover Square, a hand was laid on my shoulder. I turned, and beheld George Selby—but now worn and haggard. He was enveloped in a long military cloak, which however, could not hide the emaciation of his frame. He looked even worse than when he first came to consult me.

"A relapse?"

"No, Doctor, not a relapse. I apprehend a relapse means a return to a previous state. It is not so with me. I never felt as I feel now. Even the nature of the pain has changed."

"You still feel pain, then, from the bullet?" I asked.

"The Russian bullet," he replied, with a sickly smile; "I don't believe it's a single bullet at all; for the last week I have felt as if I had the contents of an ammunition waggon in my body. Seriously, Doctor, I don't think I shall ever get to my company, for I am convinced I can't live through a fortnight of such pain as this."

I questioned him more particularly as to his feelings—the site and nature of the pain, &c. When he had answered all my questions, I was of much the same opinion as himself, for I felt almost certain that the ball had induced aneurism of the aorta—a hopelessly incurable disease. Should my fears be well founded, the aneurism might burst at any moment, and death ensue instantly.

“Are you going to see the show, Doctor?” he asked, still with the same ghastly attempt at pleasantry.

“What show?”

“Over there,” he said, pointing with his finger; “over there, at St. George’s, Hanover Square. Come along, I see you are going. They can’t push me out of the church, as they would out of their house in Eaton Square.”

In vain I attempted to dissuade him. He would go, and we entered the church together.

When we arrived the ceremony was just about to commence.

My poor little Clara, decked out in all her costly wedding finery, and surrounded by groups of gay bridesmaids, was there. To my surprise, she was composed and quiet—never speaking unless addressed, and even then the pale lips would only murmur a monosyllable or two. Once I observed the colour come rushing to her face: it was when she recognised my unhappy companion.

Their eyes met for one moment; then the colour faded slowly from her cheek, and, with an expression of sorrowful resignation, she raised them slowly to heaven.

And now the service commenced. I took my place by the side of George Selby until its conclusion. Clara performed her part unfalteringly. Though she spoke in a low voice, she pronounced the responses firmly. Before it was concluded, Selby pressed his hand to his side, and asked my permission to go to Cavendish Square, and rest in my study until I came. He felt faint from the pain he endured, he said, and could not see the play out; he would call a cab, and leave at once. He did so, and I now fixed my whole attention on the bride. In order to observe her more closely, I moved from my place to one nearer to the altar. Though I could discover but little trace of emotion, I saw with alarm that she became paler and paler. Even her lips assumed an ashen hue, dreadful to behold. Still she continued, unfalteringly, to play her part. Surely, I thought, this cannot last. Something must go when everything—nerves, feelings, the whole system, are strung up to such a pitch; she must either weep, scream, faint, or—my thoughts were interrupted by the bustle consequent on the conclusion of the ceremony. All hastened around to congratulate the young wife, and to salute her as Lady Burley. I, too, approached her, and alarmed by her continued deadly pallor, took her hand,

and endeavoured to find her pulse. Not the faintest sign of pulsation could I detect. I looked up in her face. Her large, soft blue eyes met mine. I saw in them that which confirmed my worst fears. The pupils were dilated till the whole iris seemed occupied; the effect was beautiful, but to me it was a terrible symptom.

"Come with me into the vestry-room," I whispered, hastily taking her arm: "you feel faint, I think?"

As we passed across the chancel, the bright morning sun streamed full on her face; but though I could scarcely bear the glare, it seemed to have no effect on those soft blue eyes. As I looked in her face, I observed that the pupils were still widely dilated; the same expression might be seen in their blue depths.

"Run and call Mrs. Mansfield!" I said, to one of the bridesmaids, who, alarmed by the deadly pallor of Clara, had accompanied us into the vestry;—"quick, she is fainting!"

I felt the increasing weight of her arm on mine, and caught her as she fell towards me. Producing a small case of powerful medicines, which I always carried with me, I hastened to do all in my power to restore her from her swoon. In vain. I then endeavoured to bleed her, but no blood would flow. The large blue eyes still gazed calmly upwards to heaven, but saw not. The lips were parted, as if she was about to speak, but neither sound nor breath came from them.

At this moment, Mrs. Mansfield, with several other ladies hurried in.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the affectionate mamma; "Clara has fainted; one of those dreadful 'nervous attacks' she is so liable to. Is she coming round, Doctor! the carriage is at the door, and Sir Richard is impatient."

She did not seem at all alarmed—these "nervous attacks were so common."

I looked once more into the soft blue eyes before me. A slight, a very slight film had begun to gather over them.

"Is she coming round, Doctor?" asked Mrs. Mansfield, somewhat impatiently.

I rose from my knees, and dropped the cold hand I held.

"MADAM," I said, slowly and distinctly, "YOUR DAUGHTER IS DEAD!"

I returned home immediately, and found George Selby was seated in an easy chair facing the door. His head had fallen back, and his eyes, fixed and wide open, seemed to glare at me. A perfect torrent of blood had escaped from his mouth, and completely saturated his dress and shirt-front. I knew at once that all was over—the aneurism had burst, and death must have been instantaneous.

AN ACT OF TERRIBLE JUSTICE

CHAPTER I.

IN 1845, said the Doctor, I was attached, as assistant-surgeon, to the military hospital of Constantine. This hospital rose in the interior of the *Kasba*, upon a pointed rock from three to four hundred feet high, overlooking the entire city, the governor's palace, and the immense plain which stretches away farther than the eye can reach. It is a wild and imposing point of view. From my window, opened to let in the evening breezes, I could nearly pitch my cigar into the Rummel, which winds by the foot of the gigantic wall of rock.

Garrison life has never had any charms for me; I could never find pleasure in drinking glasses of absinthe, rum, or brandy. At the time of which I am speaking, this was called want of spirit; it was a kind of spirit which my gastric faculties did not permit me to exhibit. I was obliged to limit myself, therefore, to visiting my patients; to writing my prescriptions; to doing my duty: this done, I retired to my own room to make notes, to look over my books, or to revise my observations, and put them into order. In the evening, when the sun was slowly withdrawing his rays from the plain, with my elbow resting on the sill of my window, I stood dreamily watching this grand spectacle of nature, always the same in its marvellous regularity, and yet eternally new: a distant caravan winding its way over the hill-sides; an Arab galloping on the limits of the horizon, and lost to my sight as if he had faded into space; some cork-oak trees cutting with their leafy outlines the purple bars of the setting sun; or, far off, and high above me, the wheeling of the birds of prey, their cleaving wings spread darkly against the sombre azure of the sky; all this attracted, captivated me; I could have remained there for hours, had not duty forcibly carried me away to the dissection-table.

Nobody troubled themselves to criticise these tastes of mine, except a certain lieutenant of Voltigeurs, named Castagnac, whose portrait it is necessary that I should here draw for you.

On stepping from the public vehicle, at the moment of my first arrival at Constantine, I heard a voice behind me say: "I'd bet that this is our new assistant-surgeon."

I turned and found myself in the presence of an infantry officer, tall, dry, bony, red-nosed, his kepi cocked over his ear, with the peak pointed up to the sky, and his sabre between his legs; it was

Lieutenant Castagnac. Before I had fully made out his strange physiognomy, the Lieutenant had shaken me by the hand. "Welcome, Doctor!" he cried. "Enchanted to make your acquaintance. You're fatigued? Let us go in at once; I'll undertake to present you to the club."

The "club" at Constantine is simply the officers' place of refreshment,—their eating-house.

We entered; for how could I resist the sympathetic enthusiasm of such a man, even though I had read "Gil Blas?"

"Here!—waiter!"—cried my conductor; "two glasses! What do you drink, Doctor? Cognac?—rum?"

"No; curaçoa."

"Curaçoa! Oh!—why not '*parfait-amour*'? You've a funny taste, Doctor! Waiter! a glass of absinthe for me,—a full one—up to the brim. Good! Your health, Doctor!"

"Yours, Lieutenant."

It was thus that I was at once instated in the good graces of this strange individual.

I need hardly say that this kind of intimacy could not long be pleasant to me; I very quickly discovered that my friend Castagnac had a confirmed habit of being deeply plunged into the reading of the newspaper whenever the moment for payment arrived. This characteristic will give you a good idea of the man. On the other hand, I made the acquaintance of several other officers of the same regiment, who laughed heartily with me at this new kind of Amphitryon. One among them, named Raymond Dutertre, a brave young fellow, told me that, on his joining the regiment, something had happened to him.

"I detest backbiting," he said, "so I told Castagnac what I had to say before some of our comrades. He took the thing ill; and we went to a quiet place under the walls, where I gave him a pretty little cut with the point, which played the devil with the reputation of a skull-cracker which he had gained in some lucky duels he had fought."

Things were in this state when, towards the middle of June, fevers make their appearance in Constantine; the hospital received not only military patients, but a great number of the inhabitants, entailing upon me a considerable amount of extra work, and interfering with my regular habits.

Among my patients were Castagnac and Dutertre. Castagnac was not suffering under an attack of fever, however, but under a strange affection called *delirium tremens*,—a state of delirium, of nervous trembling peculiar to drunkards, and especially to individuals who abandon themselves to the drinking of absinthe. It is preceded by great restlessness, sleeplessness, sudden shudderings;

it is characterised by redness of face and alcoholic odour in the breath. While the attack was upon him, he uttered frequent and terrible cries, in the midst of which he repeated a woman's name, "Fatima! Fatima!" a circumstance which made me presume that at some previous time he might have been the victim of an unfortunate love-affair, for which he had consoled himself by the abuse of strong liquors.

This idea inspired me with profound pity for him; for it was truly pitiable to see his tall, meagre body bent to the right or to the left, then suddenly stiffened like a log of wood, the face pale, the nose blue, the teeth clenched; it was impossible to witness these crises without shuddering.

Upon recovering his senses, at the end of half-an-hour or so, after every one of his fits, he invariably demanded:—"What have I been saying, Doctor?—Have I said anything?"

"No, Lieutenant,—nothing."

"I must have said something; you are hiding it from me!"

"Nonsense! How can I remember? All sick persons mutter to themselves."

"I did say something, then?—what was it?" he demanded eagerly.

"How can I remember? If you wish it, I'll make a note of what you say next time."

He turned deadly pale, and looked at me as if he were endeavouring to penetrate to the bottom of my soul; he then closed his heavy eyelids, pressed his lips together, and muttered in a low tone:—"A glass of absinthe would do me good." At length his arms fell by his side, and he remained stoically motionless.

One morning, as I was about to enter Castagnac's room, I saw Raymond Dutertre coming towards me from the end of the corridor. "Doctor," he said, putting out his hand, "I am come to ask a favour of you."

"With pleasure, my dear fellow, if I can grant it," I said.

"I want you to give me a written permission to go out for the day."

"My dear fellow, don't think of such a thing; anything else you like."

"But I'm quite well, Doctor; I've had no fever for four days."

"Yes; but there's a great deal of fever about in the city, and I cannot expose you to the chance of a relapse."

"Give me only two hours,—time to go and return."

"Impossible, my dear fellow; do not press me,—it will be useless. I know how tiresome the restraints of the hospital are, I know how impatient the sick are to breathe the free air; but we must have patience."

"You won't let me go, then?"

"In the course of a week, if you go on well, we'll see about it."

He left me, greatly out of temper. I cared nothing for that; but what was my surprise to see Castagnac, with staring eyes, following his retreating comrade with a strange look.

"Well," I said; "how are you this morning?"

"I'm very well," he answered abruptly.—"Isn't that Raymond going away yonder?"

"Yes."

"What did he want?"

"Oh! only a written permission to go out, which I refused."

Castagnac drew a long breath, and, sinking back into himself, appeared to fall into a state of somnolency.

Something in his voice awoke in me I know not what vague apprehension; and I left him, feeling nervous and abstracted.

That day one of my patients died; I had the body carried into the dissecting-room, whither I descended, towards nine o'clock in the evening. It was a small vaulted room, fifteen feet high by twenty feet wide and deep, lit by two windows opening on the precipice, on the side of the high road to Philippeville. On an inclined table lay the body which I proposed to study. After placing my lamp upon a stone, built out from the side of the wall for this purpose, I began my work, and continued my task uninterruptedly for two hours. The "rappel" had long been sounded; the only sounds that reached my ears were the measured steps of the sentinel, his times of stopping, when he dropped the butt of his musket on the ground, and, from hour to hour, the passage of the patrol, the *qui vive*, the distant whisper of the password; rapid and mingled sounds, the dying away of which seemed to intensify the silence which they left behind.

It was nearly eleven o'clock, and I was beginning to feel fatigued, when, happening to turn my eyes towards the open window, I was overcome by a strange spectacle: it was a row of small grey owls, with ruffled feathers and green blinking eyes fixed upon the rays of my lamp, settled upon the sill of the window and jostling each other for places. These hideous birds were drawn thither by the scent of human flesh, and were only awaiting my departure to dart upon their prey. It is impossible for me to tell you the horror which this sight caused me: I rushed towards the window, and its revolting occupants disappeared into the darkness, like dead leaves carried away by the wind.

But at the same moment a strange sound fell upon my ear, a sound almost imperceptible in the void of the abyss. I leant forward, grasping the bar of the window and holding my breath, the better to see and listen.

Castagnac's chamber was above the dissecting-room, which was at the base of the building, its floor resting on the solid rock. Between the precipice and the hospital wall, ran a ledge, not more than a foot wide, and covered with fragments of bottles and crockery thrown out by the nurses. All was so still that the lightest sound was perceptible, and I could plainly hear the steps and gropings of somebody passing along this perilous path. "Heaven send that the sentinel does not hear him!" I said to myself. "The least hesitation, and his destruction is inevitable."

I had hardly made this reflection, when a hoarse stifled voice, the voice of Castagnac, cried through the silence: "Raymond, where are you going?"

This exclamation pierced me to the marrow of my bones. It was a sentence of death.

In a moment I heard some of the *debris* clatter down, and then along the narrow ledge I heard some one struggling with long-drawn breath. The cold sweat burst from my every pore. I tried to see—to descend—to call for help; but I was powerless; my tongue was glued to my mouth. Suddenly there was a groan—then—nothing! Yes, there was a peal of devilish laughter; then a window was slammed to, so violently as to break some of the glass in it. And then silence, like a winding-sheet, enveloped all without.

I cannot describe to you the terror which made me shrink to the far side of the room, and there, trembling, and with hair erect, and eyes fixed before me, remain for more than twenty minutes, listening through the throbbing of my heart, and vainly endeavouring, with the pressure of my hand, to stay its wild pulsations. At the end of that time I mechanically closed the window, took my lamp, mounted the stairs to my chamber, and went to bed; but it was impossible for me to close an eye. I heard sighs,—the long-drawn sighs of the victim—then the murderer's savage peal of laughter.

Worn out and needing rest as I was, fright kept me awake. I saw constantly before me the image of Castagnac in his shirt, his neck outstretched, watching his victim's descent into the black depths of the precipice; it froze my blood. "It was he," I said to myself.—"But if he ever suspects that I was there!" I seemed to hear the boards of the corridor creek under a stealthy footstep; and I raised myself upon my elbow, with open mouth and listening ear. The sirocco had risen; it whirled over the plain with lugubrious moanings, carrying even to the summit of the rock the sand and gravel of the desert. Sleep at last seized upon me, however; and towards three o'clock I sank into a heavy slumber. It was broad day when I awoke; the wind of the preceding night had fallen, and the deep blue sky was so calm and pure that I doubted my recollections, and thought that I had been under the influence of a horrible dream.

But I felt a strange disinclination to verify my impressions. I went to fulfil my professional duties ; and it was not until after I had visited all my sick wards, and examined each of my patients with more than my ordinary care, that I at last went to Dutertre's room. I knocked at the door—no answer. I opened it and went in: his bed had not been disturbed. I called the nurses and questioned them; nobody had seen Lieutenant Dutertre since the preceding evening.

Rousing all my courage, I went to Castagnac's room. A rapid glance towards the window showed me that two squares of glass in it were broken; I felt myself turn pale, but recovered my coolness as quickly as I could. "We had a high wind last night, Lieutenant," I said.

He was tranquilly seated at his table, his head supported by his hands, and making believe to read a book of military exercises. He looked up with his dull, ordinary look. "Only two windows blown in," he said; "not much harm done."

"This chamber appears to be more exposed than the others on this side," I said; "or, perhaps, you left it open!"

There was an almost imperceptible contraction of the old soldier's cheeks. "No,—it was closed, all the night," he said, looking strangely at me.

"Ah!" I said; then approached him to feel his pulse. "And how is your health?"

"I'm all right," he said.

"Good," I replied; "you are decidedly better,—a little agitated at this moment, but decidedly better. In a fortnight, Lieutenant, you will be yourself again, I promise. But then you must take care of yourself;—no more green poison!"

In spite of the good-natured tone I assumed, my voice trembled. The old scoundrel's hand, which I held in mine, produced upon me the same effect as if it had been a serpent's head. I could have wished to fly from his presence. His restless eye was fixed upon me, and its glance filled me with nameless horror. I contained myself, however. At the moment of leaving him, I returned suddenly, as if I had recollected something. "By-the-bye, Lieutenant," I said, "did Dutertre happen to pay you a visit last night?"

A shudder passed through him.

"Dutertre?"

"Yes; he has been out since yesterday,—nobody knows what has become of him. I suppose—"

"Nobody has been to see me," he said, in a dry tone of voice; "nobody."

He returned to his book, and I closed the door, as convinced of

his crime as I was that the sun was shining in the sky. Unfortunately I had no proofs. "If I denounce him," I said to myself on regaining my room, "he'll deny everything I may say,—that is evident; if he denies it, what proof of the facts can I bring forward? None. My own testimony would not suffice. Besides, crimes of this kind are not provided for by the laws. All the odium of the accusation would fall back upon my own head, and I should have made a terrible enemy."

In consequence of these reflections, I determined to wait, and to watch Castagnac without appearing to do so, persuaded that he would end in betraying himself. I went to the Commandant of the place, and simply reported to him the disappearance of Lieutenant Dutertre.

On the following day, some Arabs coming to Constantine, with their asses laden with vegetables, said that from the road to Philippeville, they had seen a uniform hanging to the high rocks of the Kasba, with birds of prey flying about in hundreds, and filling the air with their cries. They had seen the remains of Raymond. It was a task of infinite difficulty to recover them by means of ropes and ladders. The officers of the garrison devoted themselves for one or two days to this strange adventure: they made a thousand commentaries on the probable circumstances of the event, then chatted on some other subject, and finally returned to their dominoes and piquet.

Men every day of their lives exposed to the risk of sudden death have no great stores of sympathy one for the other: Jacques dead, Pierre replaces him; and the regiment is immortal—Raymond Dutertre's death was soon forgotten.

CHAPTER II.

My position in the midst of the general indifference was hard to bear; my silence weighed upon me like remorse. The sight of Lieutenant Castagnac filled me with indignation,—a sort of insurmountable repulsion: the wan look, the ironical smile of the man, froze my blood. I was sure, too, that he watched me from a distance, as if to read my inmost thoughts; and these furtive looks of his did not at all tend to reassure me as to my personal safety.

"He suspects something," I said to myself; "if he were sure, I should be lost; for he is a man that would stick at nothing."

These ideas imposed on me an intolerable restraint; my labours suffered from it, and I resolved to free myself from my state of incertitude at any price. But how? Providence came to my aid. I

was leaving the hospital one afternoon about three o'clock, when the corporal-nurse came to me with a small sheet of paper which he had found in Raymond's tunic.

"It's a letter from a woman called Fatima," said the man; "it appears that the creature had some sort of liking for Lieutenant Dutertre, and I thought you would like to see this letter."

The reading of this letter filled me with astonishment; it was very brief, and did little more than indicate the hour and the place of a proposed meeting; but what a revelation was in the signature!

"So then," I said to myself, "this woman, whose name Castagnac has called out so often in his delirium, really lives,—and loves Dutertre! Who knows? it was to meet her, possibly, that Raymond wanted me to give him permission to leave the hospital. Yes! the letter is dated the 3rd of July. It must be so! Poor fellow! not being able to leave the hospital during the day, he ventured, during the night, along that terrible path,—and there Castagnac awaited him!"

While these thoughts were passing in my mind, I descended to the base of the rock on which the hospital was built, and found myself in front of a low vault of brick, open to the wind, according to the Oriental usage. At the back of this vault, a certain Sidi Houmaïum, armed with a long wooden ladle, and gravely seated on his haunches, was stirring into an earthen vessel full of boiling water the perfumed powder of Moka. It is only right that I should tell you that I had cured Sidi Houmaïum of a malignant skin disease, against which the doctors of his country had vainly employed all their panaceas and amulets. The good fellow showed me real gratitude in return. All round his *botéga*, or coffee-shop, there was a divan covered with cushions, on which were seated five or six Moors, wearing the red fez with a tassel of blue silk; all sitting with crossed legs and half-closed eyes, the *chibouk* in their lips, tasting in silence the aroma of the tobacco of Turkey and the bean of Tonquin.

I cannot tell you why the idea had suddenly come into my mind of consulting Sidi Houmaïum. It was one of those strange impulses that are not to be explained, the causes of which are untraceable. I entered the *botéga* with a solemn step, to the great bewilderment of its occupants, and took my place on the divan. Sidi Houmaïum, without appearing to recognise me, came and presented me with a *chibouk* and a cup of boiling-hot coffee. I sipped the beverage, puffed at the *chibouk*; time moved slowly, and towards six o'clock the sanctified voice of the *muetzin* called the faithful to prayer. All rose, passing their hands over their beards, and took their way to the mosque. At last I was alone.

Sidi Houmaïum cast an uneasy look around him, then came to me, bowed himself, and kissed my hand. "What brings my lord the doctor to my humble dwelling?" he said. "What can I do to be of service to him?"

"I want you to introduce me to Fatima," I replied.

"Fatima, the Moor?"

"Yes."

"My lord, in the name of your mother, do not go near this woman!"

"Why not?"

"Because she is the perdition of the faithful and of the infidel—of all who approach her! Do not see her!"

"Sidi Houmaïum, my resolution is unshakeable. If Fatima possesses a charm that destroys, I possess one that preserves; if hers gives death, mine gives life, youth, and beauty. Tell her that, Sidi Houmaïum. Tell her that the wrinkles of age vanish at my approach; tell her that were she old, ugly as a witch, I could charm away her ugliness, and make her as fair and fresh to look upon as the new-blown lily, her lips rosy and perfumed as the queen of flowers, her teeth as pearly as those of the young jackall."

"But, my lord doctor," cried the Mussulman, "Fatima is not old; on the contrary, she is young and beautiful enough to be the pride of a sultan!"

"I know it; but she may become old. I wish to see her. Remember, Sidi Houmaïum, all your promises of service to me."

"Since such is the will of my lord," replied Sidi Houmaïum, "return hither to-morrow at the same hour. But let him remember well what I say to him; Fatima makes a shameful use of her beauty."

"Do not be uneasy on my account; I will not forget what you have told me."

After presenting my hand to the good man, I took my departure with the same slow and majestic step as that with which I had arrived. You may imagine how impatiently I awaited the hour of my rendezvous with Sidi Houmaïum; I could not control my impatience: a hundred times I listened for the cry of the *muetzin*, and even chatted with a sentinel to kill time. At length the verse of the Koran sounded in the air, from minaret to minaret, over the indolent city. I flew to Sidi Houmaïum's, and found the worthy coffee-shop keeper closing his establishment. "Well?" I inquired, out of breath.

"Fatima is waiting to see you, my lord," replied Sidi Houmaïum.

He fastened his shop, and then, without further explanation, walked off ahead of me. As he went forward without once turning

his head, and with his berrous almost sweeping the ground, I could hear him reciting I know not what litanies, in Arabic.

After awhile, quitting the high street, he entered the narrow passage of Suma, in which two persons cannot walk abreast. There, in the black mire of the gutter, under wretched stalls, swarm a population of shoemakers, morocco-embroiderers, dealers in Indian spices, aloes, dates, and rare perfumes; some going and coming with an apathetic air, others squatted with their legs crossed under them, dreaming of heaven only knows what, in the midst of an atmosphere of blue smoke, which escapes from their mouth and nostrils at one and the same time.

Suddenly, in one of the innumerable turnings of the passage, Sidi Houmaïum stopped before a low door, and raised the knocker.

"I shall want you to come in with me to act as interpreter," I said to him, in a low tone.

"Fatima speaks French," he answered, without turning his head.

At the same moment the shining face of a negress appeared at a wicket in the door. Sidi Houmaïum spoke a few words in Arabic; the door was then opened, and quickly closed behind me, the negress vanishing by a side-door, and Sidi Houmaïum remaining outside in the passage. After I had waited for some minutes, and was beginning to grow impatient, a door on the left opened, and the negress reappeared, making me a sign to follow her. I mounted a few steps, and found myself in an interior court, paved with small China tiles in mosaic. Several doors opened into this court. The negress led me into a low room with open windows, furnished with silk curtains of arabesque pattern. A large amber-coloured mat was upon the floor, round the sides of which there were a number of Persian cushions; the ceiling was ornamented with arabesques of interminable fantastic fruits and flowers. But that which at once attracted my attention was Fatima herself, seated on a divan, her eyes veiled by long, black lashes, her upper lip slightly shadowed, her nose long and thin, and her arms loaded with heavy bracelets. For a few moments the Moresque looked at me out of the corner of her eye; an arch smile then half-parted her lips.

"Come in, my lord doctor," she said, boldly; "Sidi Houmaïum told me you were coming to see me. I know what brings you. You are good enough to interest yourself in poor Fatima, who is growing old, for she will soon be seventeen. Seventeen! Yes; poor Fatima will soon want to have the beauty of her youth renewed!"

I did not in the least know what answer to make; I was confused; but I suddenly remembered the object which had brought me.

"You joke delightfully, Fatima," I said, seating myself on the divan. "I have heard your wit praised not less than your beauty, and I see that it was justly praised."

"Ah, indeed!" she said. "And by whom, pray!"

"By Raymond Dutertre."

"Raymond!"

"Yes; the young officer who recently fell into the abyss of the Rummel.—Your lover, Fatima."

She opened her large eyes with surprise.

"Who told you that he was my lover?" she cried, looking strangely at me; "it is false!—Did he tell you so?"

"No; but I know it. This letter proves it—this letter, which you wrote to him, and which was the cause of his death; for it was in attempting to come to you in the night that he risked himself on the rocks of the Kasba, and perished in the attempt."

I had hardly pronounced these words when the Moresque rose abruptly, her eyes glittering with sombre fire.

"I was sure of it!" she cried. "Yes; when the negress came and told me of what had happened, I said to her, 'Aïssa, it is *he* who has done this—it is he, the wretch!'" And as I looked at her, unable to divine the meaning of her words, she came to me, and said in a low voice, "Will he die?—do you think he will die soon? I should like to see him beheaded!"

She had seized me by the arm, and looked wildly into my eyes; I shall never forget the look of her passion-lighted face.

"Of whom are you speaking, Fatima?" I said, greatly moved. "Explain yourself; I do not understand you."

"Of whom?—of Castagnac! You are the hospital doctor—give him poison! He is a villian. I knew that he had a grudge against the young man, and I refused to lure him; but Castagnac threatened to come from the hospital, and to beat me if I did not obey him in writing that letter. See!—here is the letter he wrote to me."

I will not shock you by repeating all that Fatima told me of Castagnac—how, after betraying her, he had brutally ill-treated, and occasionally even gone so far as to beat her. I left the Moresque's house with a heavy heart. Sidi Houmanïum was awaiting me in the passage, and we wound our tortuous way back to the spot whence we had started.

"Take care, my lord doctor," said the worthy fellow, looking at me from the corner of his eye, "the Angel of Evil is hovering over your head!" I shook his hand, and bade him fear nothing.

My resolution was taken. Without losing a moment I entered the hospital, and knocked at Castagnac's door.

"Come in!" he cried.

The expression of my face must have told him that I came for no good to him; for the moment he saw me enter, he rose as if he were stupefied.

"Oh!—is it you?" he stammered, putting on a forced and sickly smile; "I did not expect to see you." The only answer I made was to show him the letter he had written to Fatima.

He turned pale; and after looking at the letter for several moments, would have sprung upon me; but I stopped him.

"If you move another step," I said, putting my hand to my sword, "I'll kill you like a dog! You are a scoundrel! You have murdered Dutertre! I was in the dissecting-room below, and heard all. Do not deny it. Your conduct towards this unfortunate woman is odious. Listen! I might give you up to justice; but your dishonour would redound upon us all. If you have any courage left, destroy yourself. I will give you till to-morrow; to-morrow, at seven o'clock, if I find you living, I will myself drag you before the commandant."

I left him without waiting for any answer, and hastened to give orders to the sentinel to prevent Lieutenant Castagnac from leaving the hospital on any pretext. I gave the same order to all the attendants, and made them responsible for any negligence or weakness. I then took my way to the place where I was accustomed to dine, as if nothing had happened; I was gayer than usual, indeed, and sat at table till past eight o'clock. Since Castagnac's crime had been materially proved to me, I felt pitiless; Raymond cried to me for vengeance, and I was determined that he should not cry in vain.

After leaving the dinner-table, I went to a rosin-seller and bought a large torch, such as our spahis carry on the occasion of their night-fêtes. I then went back to the hospital, and directly descended to the dissecting-room, taking care to double-lock the door after me. The voice of the *muetzin* announced the tenth hour, the mosques were deserted, the night was profoundly dark.

I seated myself before one of the windows, breathing the mild gusts of wind, and giving myself up to the reveries which had always been so dear to me. How much suffering, how many inquietudes, I had gone through during the past fortnight! I had endured nothing like it during the whole of my previous existence; and I now felt as if I had escaped from the claws of the Spirit of Evil, and was enjoying the first taste of my reconquered liberty.

Time passed thus; the patrol had already twice relieved the sentinels, when suddenly I heard the sound of rapid but stealthy steps on the stairs,—then a knock at the door. I made no answer. A febrile hand groped for the key. "It is Castagnac!" I said to myself, while my blood ran cold.

At the end of a couple of seconds, a voice cried: "Open the door!" I was not deceived; it was he. He listened for awhile, then tried to force open the heavy oaken door.

A short silence followed, then a second attempt. I kept myself motionless, and held my breath. Something fell upon the steps, and then I heard the sound of retreating feet. I had escaped death. But what would he do next? For fear of a new and more violent attempt to burst open the door, I drew the two heavy iron bolts with which it was furnished.

I then went back to the window, whither a strange and alarming sound had attracted me. I looked cautiously out. A shadow was moving in the darkness along the ledge from which poor Dutertre had gone to destruction. The moon had risen on the side of the city, and the shadow of the hospital was thrown broadly over the abyss; but I had no doubt that the form moving towards the window at which I was standing was that of Castagnac, of whose murderous intentions also I had no doubt.

Peering through the darkness, I saw that the would-be murderer was advancing with his back pressed against the wall, the abyss invisible in the darkness before him. He moved slowly and with all possible precaution. I shouted to him the death-cry:—"Raymond, where are you going?"

But whether it was that he was prepared for whatever might happen, or that he had more *sang-froid* than his victim, the wretch only answered by a mocking laugh.

"You are there, then—as I suspected—Doctor! Wait a bit; I'll come round the other way. We have a little account to settle."

I lit my torch, and held it over the precipice.

"It is too late," I cried; "look down at your grave, scoundrel!"

The immense shelves of the abyss, with their black shining rocks heaped into wild shapes, were illuminated to the bottom of the valley. It made even me giddy to look at, and I shrank back from the sight. —But he—he was separated from the gulf only by the length of a crick—with what terror must he have been struck!

His knees bent under him,—his hands clutched at the wall. I held out my torch once more. An enormous bat, driven away by the light, took wing and wheeled in dismal circles around the flame; and far, far down, the waves of the Rummel glittered in the immensity. "Mercy!" cried the wretch, in a broken voice. "Mer—"

I had not courage to prolong his agony, but threw the blazing torch out into the black abyss. How slowly it seemed to sink into the depths below!—down!—down! But before its flame was

extinguished in the waters of the river, a dark shadow for a moment came between it and my sight,—and I knew that justice was done.

On leaving the dissecting-room, my foot struck against something on the stairs. It was my own sword, with which Castagnac, with his habitual perfidy, had intended to kill me; in this way thinking to make it appear that I had committed suicide. As I had expected to find, the door of my room had been broken open; my bed had been turned over, my papers scattered about. He had plainly determined to rob as well as murder me. This discovery completely removed from my mind the feeling of involuntary pity with which the wretch's terrible end had inspired me.

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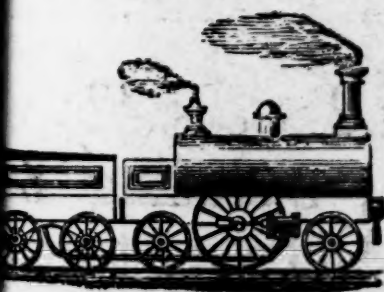
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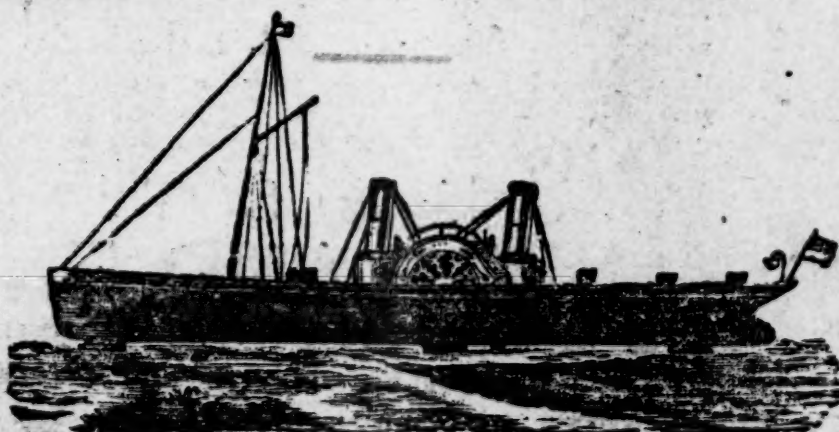


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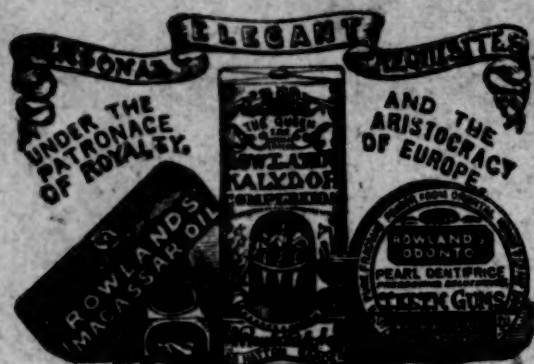
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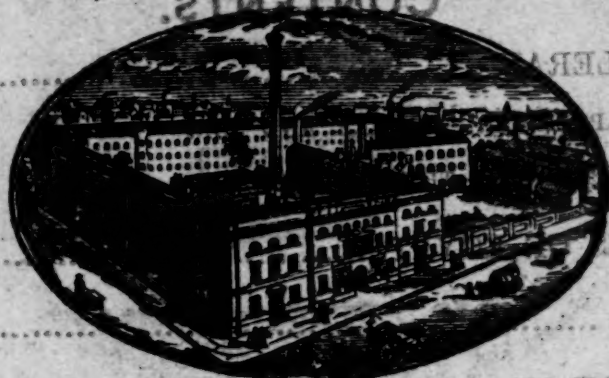
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